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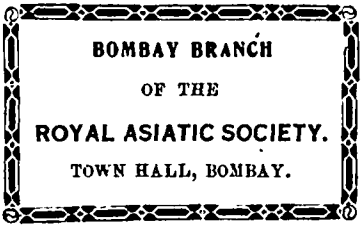

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Legends of Galloway.

LEGENDS

OF

GALLOWAY;

BEING

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a

A SERIES OF TRADITIONS,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF ITS

ANCIENT HISTORY, CUSTOMS, MANNERS, AND SUPERSTITIONS

BY

JAMES DENNISTON, Esq.

Invidious rust corrodes the bloody steel;
Dark and lismantled lies each antient peel;
Afar, at twilight gray, the peasants shun,
The dome accurst, where deeds of blood were done.

LEYDEN.

EDINBURGH:
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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE EARL OF GALLOWAY,

&c. &c. &c.

THE FOLLOWING

Legends

ARE INSCRIBED,

AS A SMALL TOKEN OF ESTEEM,

BY

HIS LORDSHIP'S GRATEFUL

AND

MOST OBEDIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THAT many wild, yet highly interesting legends, are still to be met with among the sequestered glens and lonely straths of Galloway, is a fact that must be well known to every lover of nature, and nature's unsophisticated children.

Nursed amidst scenes of the most magnificent sublimity, where he was hushed to rest by the hum of the distant waterfall,—where his orisons arose on the wings of the tempest,—and where the voice of the thunder-cloud fell like music on his ear,—could it be matter of wonder that the author caught a flash of

ardent enthusiasm from the grandeur of the objects with which he was surrounded,—and that, as he skipped from rock to rock, with all the elastic buoyancy of youth, he has often, with conscious pride, exclaimed, "This is my own, my native land!"

That a mind so constituted, should reap but a slender portion of enjoyment from the tamer, and more chastened beauties of the pyebald diety, is nothing more than might have been expected. Accustomed, from the earliest period of adolescence, to contemplate nothing but the sterner features of her character, his step was only free, and his thoughts unfettered, amidst the heath of his native mountains. It was there, and there alone, he could muse, till the rugged asperities of his passions were softened and melted down, like the morning va-

pour of the lake, into thin air. It was there he felt his "bosom's lord sit lightly on his throne,"—where, at peace with himself and the whole universe, the kindlier feelings of his nature would take a more extensive range, and even inanimate objects become dear to his affections, till the grey rock that centinelled his mountain-path has been greeted with a smile of joyful recognition,—and the antient thorn that overhung the waterfall, hailed as a brother of the desert.

In this dreaming state of vitality has he wandered, unconscious of the lengthening shadow, or the "march of time," till the approaching storm, or descending dew, has induced him to seek the shelter, and share in the hospitality of the cottage of the mountain shepherd, where, seated around his humble hearth, he has often listened with

an intensity of feeling to the patriarch of the family, as he chaunted, in a low monotonous tone, the legend of the Ghost of the Cairn, or the Brownie of the Linn, till every blanched cheek and starting eye bore evidence of the implicit credit it had obtained, and the blighting impression it had made.

And while their faculties lay thus spell-bound, under the freezing influence of the tale of terror, the aged narrator would draw himself up to his full length, dash his thin locks back from his withered forehead, his voice no longer trembling and querulous, but possessing the full mellow swell of unbroken vigour, and with a beam of triumph lighting up his dim eye, he would point out the scene of one of the unrecorded battles of his native country, and tell how King Robert Bruce, assisted by the widow's

three sons, and a handful of Gallovidian shepherds, gave a fatal overthrow to the forces of England.

He was silent, but the magical effect of his tale was visible in the flushed cheeks and fiery eyes of his rustic audience; the flame of patriotism was lighted up within them, and its electric scintillations flashed from every bosom. Nor did the erratic stranger escape a spark of the celestial energy. On the contrary, he has listened with undivided attention to legends of a similar description, till, over-leaping time and space, he has at last identified himself with the transaction, and, like the worshippers of Brahma, fancied he enjoyed something like a twilight recollection of a previous state of existence.

But enough of himself and his wayward moods :—he must add an apologeti-

cal sentence or two in favour of the following traditions.

To those friends who have honoured him with their patronage, and who have been instrumental in forwarding his views while preparing the present volume for publication, he can only return his most grateful thanks;—never shall their efforts in his favour be blotted from his recollection, nor their personal attentions cease to summon up a kindred feeling within him.

It would be unworthy his character, to permit the following pages to go abroad into the world under the impression that they are literal transcriptions of the legends he has given. That their basis rests on popular tradition he avows to be true, but he begs leave at the same time to state, that their getting up, or rather amplification, should they be found

deserving of the term, has been entirely his own.

He has also to state, that a short abridgement of the "Miller of Eldrig" once made its appearanee in a provincial newspaper of very limited circulation; but he can assure his readers, that not a page of the whole series, with that exception, was ever printed before.

In conclusion, he begs leave to offer a single comment on the style and composition of his legends.

Doomed from infancy to tread with unsandalled feet the thorny paths of life, little leisure was afforded him for studying the graces of logical acumen, or didactic embellishment. For, when early sent in search of the "bubble reputation," the pursuit seldom led him to "cool retreats, and academic groves." It is much to be feared, therefore, that

those, whose trade is censure, will find sufficient food for their spleen in analizing this little volume, should its unpretending author be so unfortunate as to be laid under the ban of the literary empire.

With all its imperfections on its head, however, he submits it to the inspection of a candid public, satisfied that if he has committed no great fault, his minor peccadilloes will be visited with a more lenient chastisement.

CREETOWN, 20*th January*, 1825.

THE

Standard of Denmark,

&c. &c. &c.

THE

STANDARD OF DENMARK,

&c. &c. &c.

INTRODUCTION.

On a superficial review, it would appear capable of affording only a melancholy gratification to the philosophic mind, to wander amidst the ruins of decayed splendour,—to mark, with the eye of an antiquary, the tottering buttress and the moulder-ing arch,—to doze away, month after month, in futile attempts to re-emblazon the dilapidated cog-nisance, and to spell and arrange the erased le-gend,—to trace the sinuosities of the ample fosse, —to moralise on the progress of time, in the march

of destruction,—and, finally, to appreciate the *tout ensemble* as forming a conspicuous figure in the back-ground of a landscape.

But these reflections must naturally lead to others of a deeper and more interesting character. They lead us to consider them not merely as accumulations of rubbish, but as the labours and habitations of living men; they teach us to give a voice to every stone, and to draw a moral inference from every breeze that whistles through the tracery of the shafted oriel; they enable us to draw aside the curtain that separates the past from the present, and through the stormy vista of ages that are fled, to catch a hasty and transient glimpse of a portion of the barbaric pomp and feudal grandeur, that once spread an air of royal magnificence over their now moss-covered courts and roofless halls; they summon up, in dusky succession before us, all the bustle and array of a baronial residence, both in peace and in war; and they call on us to mark the fleeting pageant as it passes in review before us.

The first beam of the rising sun had scarcely shed a line of trembling radiance over the tops of

the long avenue of dark pines, that stood like open files of gigantic sharpshooters, to guard the approach to the lofty mansion, when the airy note of the bugle, and the deep bay of the stag-hounds aroused the slumbering inmates from the lethargy in which their senses had been steeped by the midnight wassail. Little time was wasted in preparation; the gates were thrown open; and the long drawn procession issued from beneath the lofty portcullis. The Serfs, armed with knotted staves shod with iron, dived into the deepest recesses of the forest, cheering on the hounds, whose echoes, rolling away in deep reverberations among the surrounding mountains, served to throw a spell of indescribable fascination over the whole sylvan array. At last, the shades of evening closing around, reminded them of the comforts that awaited them in the great hall of the castle; and the *mort*, which echoed from the bugle of the chief, recalling his scattered friends and vassals, summoned them to his presence;—the bows were unstrung;—the game collected;—and many a gallant stag was there, whose flight had been arrested by the hissing bolt, and many a grisly

boar, whose bloody tusks grinned horrible even in death. The cavalcade returned with the spoils of the day borne in triumph before them. The feast was spread;—the mighty chine adorned the centre of the ample board;—the wine cup passed in unceasing rotation;—and the sound of the harp, and the voice of the bard, were lost amidst shouts of boisterous mirth and unceasing uproar.

But hark! what note is that, which, rising on the midnight gale, disturbs the revellers amidst their bacchanalian orgies? Intelligence is brought, that a hostile chief has invaded their territory, and is carrying every thing before him with fire and sword. They rush to the battlements, where the fatal truth is written in blazing characters on the murky atmosphere. Rage and grief light up the fire of vengeance in their souls;—they arm, and rush to the plain: The earth trembles beneath the prancing of their steeds; and the mountains echo back the shouts of their defiance. But what pen can record the horrors of the midnight combat, or paint in language sufficiently glowing, the blindfold rage of indiscriminate slaughter? At last, the invaders fly—terror adding swiftness to

their feet and vigour to their exhausted bodies,—and close behind follow their pursuers, goaded forward by every passion that can inflame to madness the savage bosom. They remind each other of their cottages smoking in ruins,—of their murdered or houseless wives,—of their naked, shivering, starving children,—of their cattle plundered, and their whole earthly comforts blasted for ever.—"Vengeance alone is ours," they exclaim, "and we will exact it till the angel of extermination shall flap his wings over a breathless desert."

Glutted with slaughter, and feeble with exertion, they return slowly to their native glens, driving their prey before them; the song of victory arises, mingled with the voice of lamentation. The spoil is parted, nor were those who nobly fell in battle forgotten.—The feast is spread anew, and the goblet blushes to the brim, with the exhilarating beverage; and all the toils, and all the perils of the eventful night, are drowned in the oblivious draught.

Such were the vicissitudes to which the great and noble of the land, at the stormy period allud-

ed to, were daily and hourly exposed; petty tyrants in their native domain, war their trade, and rapine their pastime, the annals of their lives could answer no other purpose than to chronicle moral turpitude; and fortunately, in most instances, the historian has shrunk in disgust from the appalling record, and left them to float a wreck down the ocean of time, till their names as well as their deeds are forgotten; or if any remembrance of them still lingers in the land that gave them birth, it is only to be found in the wild legends of the simple peasantry, who, out of the scanty materials handed down by tradition, have woven such a tissue of improbable fiction, that in few instances can any dependance be placed in the monstrous detail.

In our mental wanderings, amidst these scenes of moral desolation, how gratifying has it appeared to us to discover, that even in this outskirt of the kingdom, this literary *terra incognita*, we should still be able to boast a few names, around whom the pen of the historian has entwined a wreath of never-fading glory. Patriots in the field, or martyrs on the scaffold, they have been alike ready to assert their country's indepen-

dence with the sword, or to suffer for the truths of their holy religion at the stake.

Amongst the number thus transmitted down, and whose memories are still buoyant on the wave of time, there are few who have deeper calls on the gratitude of the nation, than that of Kerlie. There are few families who can boast a higher antiquity. Henry, the Minstrel, in a passage of "the Wallace," says,

"Good Kerlie past, had been with Wallace long,
And done full well in many fellon throng.
This Kerlie, then, that could with Wallace fare,
Will Ker he hight, mine author will declare.
Kerlie in Irish is Ker-Liddle called,
In Carrick he had heritage of ald.
His forbear, which aye worthy was of hand,
Saint David, King, him brought out of Ireland;
Syne at Dummoir, where first Norways came in,
This Ker made great discomfice of their kin;
With seven hundred he vanquished nine thousand,
Some drowned in Doon, some slain upon the land.
Those whole lands the good king gave him until,
How Wallace," &c.

From this it would appear, that the Kers of the east, and the Kerlies of the south, were all one family, and that the whole were of Irish origin.

The latter assertion receives something like confirmation from the following authority:—Macpherson, in his introduction to the Poems of Ossian (quoting Tacitus,) says, that the invasion of Ireland by the *Firbolg* and *Belgæ* occurred in the year 211 of the Christian æra; and Felix O'Carroll, in his translation of the chronicles of Tara, and history of the Semachies, Dublin edit. fol. 1691, says that Carrol, King of Munster, was ejected from his kingdom by these barbarians, and fled to Scotland, where he was hospitably received by the King, and had lands assigned him in *Galloway*, where he lived in great splendour. Now, our readers will, we trust, consider it neither a forced nor fanciful etymology, when we state our belief that Carrol and Kerlie are the same; nor can we find, in the whole catalogue of Gallovidian surnames, any thing that approaches so near it, either in orthography or pronunciation. It may be farther stated, in support of the above etymology, that, not far from Cruggleton, there are extensive lands which still bear the name of Carleton. Now, may it not have originally been *Carroltown?* There are many more etymologies which might be

adduced in favour of our assumption that Carrol and Kerlie are the same. But we shall trespass no farther on our reader's patience, than just to quote an extract or two from "the buke of me wanderins in ye weste, be Father Stewart, ane moncke o' Crossraguel."

This volume, partly in Latin and partly in English, must have been written sometime about the middle of the sixteenth century, but the title-page being torn off the copy in our hands, we cannot ascertain the precise date. He states, in corroboration of Henry the Minstrel, from whom he probably quotes, "the next great family are the Kerlies of Cruggleton, who, being brave warriors, often stood boldly up for the independence of their country under Wallace; and it was one of their forefathers, who, at a place called Dummoir, in Carrick, was particularly instrumental in giving the Danes a notable overthrow, and took Eric, the Son of Swain, prisoner—for which service the King gave him lands in Carrick."*

* Father Stewart accounts for his pilgrimages, by informing his readers, that the Abbey being much out of

We have taken the liberty of modernizing the orthography, that it may be more generally understood by the English reader.

We again return to Henry the Minstrel, who introduces our hero to our notice on the morning of the battle of Loudon Hill :—he says,

" Wallace received what men would come him till,
The holy oath they made with right good will,
Before the Earl, all with a good accord,
And him received as captain, and their lord.
His special men that came with him from hame,
The one, hight Grey, the other Keirlie by name—
In his service came first, with all their main,
To Loudon Hill, where that Fenwick was slain.
He then commanded aye next him, pursue,
For he them kenn'd right hardy, wise and true."

He next introduces him at the storming of Cruggleton Castle, in the following passage, with which we shall conclude our extracts :—

" Then took he two, when that the night was dim,
Stephen of Ireland, and Kierlie that could climb,

---

repair, and its funds exhausted, he was sent to solicit the assistance of the well disposed for the above laudable purpose; and in this manner, he gives brief notices of the principal families to whom he applied.

The water under, and clamb the rock sae strong,
Thus entered they the southern men among.
The watch before took no tent to that side,
Thir three in fier soon to the pool can glide.
Good Wallace then strake the porter himsel',
Dead over the rock into the dyke he fell,
Let down the bridge, and blew his horn on hight,
The bushment brake, and came in all their might," &c.

From these historical extracts, the following facts appear to be established, that, lords of an ample domain, and a castle, whose natural strength rendered it all but impregnable, the Kerlies long defied all the power the English could bring against them—and even at that eventful period of Scottish history, when the kingdom lay prostrate at the feet of the most perfidious and remorseless tyrant that ever disgraced a throne. When the cruelties of Edward in Scotland could only find a parallel in the tender mercies exhibited by Cortes in America—when the great feudal chieftains of the land had become the sworn vassals and worshippers of this political *Moloch*, bartering away, for a transient security, their allegiance to their lawful sovereign and dignity, as independent men—when the King himself was

driven from the throne of his fathers, and the crown tottering on the brows of a trimming apostate—it was then that the gallant chief of Cruggleton, scorning to enter into any partial compact which might compromise his own dignity, or the independence of his native land, stood boldly on his defence; and such was the courage he displayed, that there is every reason to believe he would have been enabled, ultimately to maintain his ground—but alas! what open force never could have achieved, treachery effected: for Lord Soulis being at that time a secret vassal of the crown of England, came, on pretext of a friendly visit, and contrived, by some means or other, to introduce a number of his followers, sufficient to overpower the garrison, whom, tradition says, he put to the sword, and held the castle in name of his perfidious master. Kerlie himself, it would appear, escaped—but how, is not mentioned.*

* In the year 1282, Lord Soulis came on a friendly visit to Cruggleton, and finding the place but weakly garrisoned, he introduced a number of his followers, sufficient to overpower it, and expelling the chief of the Kierlies, he held the castle for the King of England, whose vassal he at that time was.—*Father Stewart.*

Many ineffectual attempts were afterwards made by him, to eject the traitors and regain his castle; but failing in all these,—and his few remaining followers having been either slain or dispersed, he was driven to seek shelter in the wilds and fastnesses of his native land, till the unexampled cruelties of the invaders filled up the measure of their crimes, and the sword of retributive justice sent them in hecatombs to their final audit.

In the unprovoked and unprincipled invasion that immediately preceded the period here alluded to, the English seem to have embraced the too common error, that to over-run was to conquer. And yet, on a candid review of the political situation of Scotland, at that eventful period of her history, little else could have been anticipated than her permanent subjugation. The whole strengths of the land were in possession of the enemy. The nobles, weak, factious, and dispirited by recent defeats, were totally incapable of bringing any thing together that deserved the name of an army, had they even meditated such a measure. With their King *de jure* an exile, and their King *de facto* a prisoner, what other inference could be

drawn, than that Scotland had become a great fief of the crown of England?

It forms no part of our plan to follow the immortal Wallace from victory to victory, in his short but brilliant career: it is sufficient to state, that no sooner was the standard of freedom raised amidst the mountains of Kyle, than the gallant Kerlie, smarting under the lash of his recent injuries, and stung to madness at the treachery practised against him, flew on the wings of vengeance, to unite himself and his few remaining followers to the fortunes of the hero;—they exchanged the right hand of fidelity on the morning of the battle of Loudon-hill; and, before sunset, they ratified the covenant over the mangled remains of England's noblest warriors.

From that eventful day, which, trifling as it may appear in the records of military enterprize, was, nevertheless, one of vital importance to the nation, as it served to fan the fire of independence, which still smouldered beneath the ruins, and which the invaders vainly flattered themselves lay extinguished forever; that from that day forward, till finally separated by death, the fortunes of

Wallace and Kerlie were linked together in a bond of indissoluble union, nor during the whole period of that eventful struggle, do we find that their friendship suffered the slightest interruption.

As a proof of this, one of the first acts of Wallace, after he had been elected Regent by the assembled states of the kingdom, was to march a force into Galloway, for the avowed purpose of reinstating his friend in his patrimonial domains, still held in the hands of the English. The result of this expedition is told at length by Henry the Minstrel, a quotation from which we have given, and to whom the reader is referred for farther particulars.

Kerlie, thus restored, did not forget his friend and benefactor. He collected his scattered vassals, whom he armed and disciplined in the best manner his circumstances would permit, holding a chosen body always in readiness to march at the call of the Regent. Nor was there any battle of note fought during the regency in which he did not take a part. And tradition affirms, that at the fatal battle of Falkirk, Kerlie appeared at

the head of five hundred men, most of whom were slain in an ineffectual attempt to rescue Sir John Græme, who was surrounded by that portion of the English army commanded by Bruce. The tradition farther asserts, that it was by the spear of his sovereign the hero lost his life. Be that as it may, it is a well established fact, that after the death of Græme, Wallace did not repose the same confidence in any other follower, as in Kerlie; and in every instance we find this repaid by a warmth of zeal and devotion to the cause in which they were embarked, that amply justified the selection he had made;—and even in the last closing scene, when the snares of the enemy were narrowing around him—when the hero whom they could never conquer in the field, was doomed to fall a martyr to most unnatural treachery—when the nearest relative he had on earth, allured by the gold and the promises of England, became accessory to his own political degradation, and for a handful of vile dross, gibbeted himself to everlasting infamy, by betraying his own nephew into the hands of a merciless and unprincipled tyrant! It was then that the brave chief of Cruggleton,

scorning to outlive the hero under whom he had fought, and the cause for which he had bled, rushed on the spears of the enemy, and sealed with his blood his devotion to his country and fidelity to his general.

In this hasty review of the life of Kerlie, both history and tradition have been ransacked to furnish out the scanty materials; and it is deeply to be regretted, that so little is known, where so much has been deserved. That he was a patriot in the strictest acceptation of the term, is a fact not to be questioned;—and that he was the faithful friend and companion of Wallace, must be equally admitted; as, under every vicissitude of fortune, we find him ranged by his side, enduring his toils, or sharing his triumphs, and true to the end. Kerlie's was the last mortal arm that was raised to defend him from the dastardly assassins to whom he was basely sold.

There are still a number of traditions lingering among our solitary glens, and cherished by the peasantry, recording the actions of the redoubted Kerlie. But these are either too trivial in their nature to merit any notice; or when

otherwise, so combined with palpable absurdities, or monstrous anachronisms, that they are altogether unfit for publication. The following was taken, about twenty years ago, from the recital of an old man, who gave its outline with a degree of clearness, and minute attention to particulars, seldom to be met with in a tradition of such length.

It need scarcely be added, that the Kerlie of the legend was not the hero of Loudon-hill, but, in all probability, a descendant of that redoubted character. And it may afford a portion of gratification to those of our readers, not already acquainted with the fact, to be informed, that there are still three highly respectable families in Scotland, who boast their descent from that brave assertor of our independence; and after the most minute and diligent enquiry, we can, with certainty, now affirm, that Captain Robert M'Kerlie, Ordnance Store-keeper in Edinburgh Castle, is the undoubted lineal representative of that ancient house.

Of the other personages in the drama, little can be said. Tradition records, that the castle

of Kirkclaugh was at one time possessed by a famous freebooter called Greme; and that he had incurred a sentence of outlawry, for some depredation committed on the border, and fled to Galloway, where he obtained a footing in the manner set forth in the legend. Many acts of barbarous cruelty are handed down of this ruffian, too gross to be mentioned, one only of which we shall simply notice.

In an excursion he once made to plunder the lands of Muirfad, he met with a notable defeat; for the old laird, aware of his intentions, had collected a body of his friends and dependents together, and these being placed in ambush, Greme was taken completely by surprise, a number of his gang killed, and himself seriously wounded. Stung with rage and shame at being thus foiled, where he did not expect even resistance, he vowed vengeance;—nor was it long protracted; for, watching his opportunity, he appeared so suddenly before the castle, with a strong force, that those within were taken quite unprepared. What they could do they did: They secured the gates, or rather doors, for it never could have been a place capa-

ble of making much resistance. Græme demanded admission, uttering the most dreadful threats in case of refusal. Gordon, sensible of his own weakness, was desirous of entering into some compromise with the robbers, and, for that purpose, solicited a parley at the door, against which, Græme had by this time, piled up faggots and brush-wood, for the purpose of setting it on fire. A sum of money in the meantime, and a future annuity, by way of black-meal, for protection, or rather forbearance, were the terms agreed on. The Laird being in no condition to stipulate, was glad to accept of any thing short of ruin.

Their arrangements having been finally made, Græme observed, that they might as well part friends; and advancing to the grated window, in the centre of the door through which their negotiations had been carried on, and having received the stipulated sum, he held out his hand at parting. As this was a piece of courtesy which could not be declined with safety, the proffered symbol of amity was accepted. No sooner, however, were their hands joined, than Græme, throwing a noose

over the other's wrist, pulled with all his might, till an iron staple was driven into the wall, to which he fastened the end of the chain, and instantly setting fire to the pile, burnt him alive behind his own door;—the castle, and all it contained, being destroyed, except the lady, as shewn in the legend.

Of this celebrated personage, little more remains to be said, as every thing worth recording has been engrossed in the following tale; and although, like most traditions, it may have many fictitious circumstances interwoven in its texture, yet, on the whole, it identifies itself with too many localities, not to have its basis resting on something more stable than conjecture; the names, and many of the occurrences, being quite familiar to the ears of most old people in the neighbourhood.

CHAP. I.

" Ye pilgrim cam to ye knicht's ha' dore,
An' he tirled at ye pin,
An' he praied for ye sake o' ye Sancts in glore,
They would rise an' let him in."

BONNY MARY GORDON,
An old Galloway song.

CRUGGLETON Castle, the principal scene of the following legend, stands on the highest swell of a continuous range of precipices, that extend for some miles along the eastern shore of the county of Wigtown, the ruin still forming a conspicuous land-mark from the sea, for vessels entering the bay. On approaching it from the country, the traveller cannot help admiring the judicious selection of the ground on which it stands, or rather stood; as, according to the ancient system of warfare, and mode of attack, it must have been all but impregnable, and even, according to modern tactics, it possesses capabilities, which, under the

direction of a skilful engineer, might still be rendered a place of considerable strength.

That portion of the precipice on which it stands, juts forward into the sea, like one of the bastions of a star-fort, having a deep re-entrant angle on each of its sides, without any curtain. The castle itself, which stood directly in the gorge of the bastion, has had a deep and broad ditch towards the land, and even beyond that a line of fortifications, which has extended along the whole opposite faces of the re-entrant angles, so that, till these were in possession of the besiegers, the castle never could have been taken in flank, and the assault in front, considering the nature of the ground, must have been all but hopeless. At the bottom of one of the angles, there are still remaining some marks of a path, which must have been cut out of the solid rock, for the purpose of communicating with the beach beneath; and some ruins at the high water-mark, point out where their ships or vessels must have found, at best, a precarious shelter. We are informed, however, that staples are still visible, to which a chain has been fastened, which, when drawn tight, alike prevented ingress and egress. The path up the precipice, was inter-

sected at the harbour by a gate, having a small guard-house over it, and was defended by a ditch, portcullis, &c. and the path then ascended in a winding direction around the base of the point, or bastion on which the castle stood, till it terminated in the bottom of one of the re-entrant angles, as has already been said, having a wall or parapet on its lower side, to prevent accidents. Although almost every vestige of these works have now disappeared, yet tradition maintains that they once existed, and reflection throws her mite into the scale in its favour, and leads to the conviction, that half the local advantages of the situation must have been lost, without some communication with the sea. A high battlemented wall swept round the court-yard; and from its whole banquette, the path from the shore to the top of the precipice, was seen and commanded, while a gate, fortified in the same manner as at the harbour, defended the castle from surprise on the side next the sea. Another wall, forming a segment of an extensive circle, lined the interior side of the ditch, in front of the castle, from the one re-entrant angle to the other, and having a gate in its centre strongly fortified, rendering it,

as has already been said, a place of great strength. This castle had, for time immemorial, been the patrimonial residence of the powerful family of Kerlie.

On the eastern side of Wigtown bay, and almost directly opposite to Cruggleton, stood the once formidable castle of Kirkclaugh. It, like the former, reared its head in terrific grandeur over the brink of a frightful precipice, and had been defended towards the land by a ditch of formidable depth. The almost imperceptible ruins of a stone pier points out, as in Cruggleton, where their slender navy had been sheltered from the southern tempest, and a deep and capacious cavern, accesible only at low water, runs far up beyond the foundations of the castle, and which, after several intricate turnings and windings, tradition says, terminated in an opening in one of the angles of the court-yard. Although no such *souteraine* can now be discovered, either from the cavern below, or the ruin above, yet its existence is rendered highly probable by the reflection, that in case of a siege, the garrison would have been effectually cut off from all communication with the beach beneath, and consequently their navy could have been of no

use, either in procuring supplies, or facilitating their escape.

This almost impregnable castle, with a considerable extent of territory around it, was the property of a gentleman of the name of M'Culloch. He was a cadet of the family of Cardoness, and married a daughter of Gordon of Muirfad, by whom he had one daughter. They were much esteemed by all ranks of society, and at a period when the feudal institutions rendered the lower classes altogether dependent on their superiors, the family of Kirkclaugh were looked up to as an order of beings highly exalted, by their moral virtues, above the petty tyrants of that barbarous æra. It has been said that they made the four pilgrimages barefooted—nay farther, that they founded an abbey somewhere in the parish of Kirkmabreck, for the support of twelve orphan children, which they liberally endowed.

One stormy evening in the month of December, when the whole household were assembled around a blazing wood fire in the great hall, the warden came in, and announced that a stranger had arrived, and begged hard to be admitted for the night. He

said, his whole appearance bore evident marks of extreme wretchedness, that his clothes were in tatters, and his head bare; and yet, in spite of these symbols of misery, his bearing and address bespoke him of an order above that of a common mendicant.

"I will question him myself," said the laird; "he must be worthless indeed, if I send him from my doors on such a night." Full of his hospitable purpose, he ascended the small turret over the gate, and through the gloom of the fast fading twilight, he beheld a human being shivering beneath the tempest. The rain distilled in torrents from the tatters in which his form was enveloped, yet his tall commanding figure stood erect beneath the blast that raved around him. "Whence come you, and whither are you going?" enquired the laird. "I come from the borders of Scotland—a wretch laden with many sorrows, ruined in circumstances, and broken in spirit, and will feel grateful for shelter from the storm, fire to warm me, and food to appease the cravings of hunger, and in the morning I will depart." "These are boons I never denied to the meanest of the human race. Warder, admit the stranger, whilst I give the necessary orders for food and raiment."

He entered, and on a nearer view, rose considerably in the estimation of the inmates of the castle. His deportment, though modest, was free from embarrassment, and his address shewed, that to whatever grade of society he actually belonged, he was no stranger to the manners of the highest.

When the calls of hunger had been satisfied, and his drenched rags exchanged for comfortable apparel, his appearance underwent such a metamorphosis, that those who saw him on his first approach to the gate, had some difficulty in recognising him.

The laird, resuming the discourse, which his sense of what was due to the stranger's wants induced him to break off at the first interview, enquired by what misfortune he had been reduced to his present condition; and was informed, that a marauding party from the English side, had surprised his house; that as he had no force to oppose to them, except his single arm, he concealed himself, under the impression that they would retire with what plunder they could get. But in this he was fatally mistaken; for, disappointed in what appeared to have been the principal object in their expedition, they wreaked their malice on

his innocent wife and child, whom they put to death before his eyes, ere he could interpose to save them. He then sprung from his place of concealment, unarmed as he was, and wresting a sword out of the hands of the first he could reach, laid him dead at his feet in an instant. He uttered a cry of horror as he threw himself over the bleeding bodies of all he held dear on earth, into the very midst of his enemies; nor could he possibly tell how he escaped in the strife, as revenge, not safety, was his object. Recollection seemed for the time to have forsaken him, as, when it returned, he found himself at a considerable distance from his house; and what appeared to him most singular was, that he was unhurt. He said, that, on casting his eyes backwards, he saw his late comfortable dwelling enveloped in flames, and heard the shouts of the plunderers mingled with the lowing of his cattle, as they were driving them off; that he flew, rather than ran back to their rescue—but still, as he approached the blazing ruin, the noise seemed to recede, and fall fainter on his ear;—in short, the prey was carried off, and he was left without a house

to shelter him, or a morsel of bread to satisfy the demands of nature,—a houseless, friendless outcast, with every endearing link that bound him to his species, snapt asunder and destroyed forever; that even the last sad token of respect, which the dear objects of his affection could ever have received at his hands, was denied them, as their bodies were consumed in the blazing ruin! He fled, he knew not whither, the bloody sword still in his hand. He wandered through the deepest recesses of the forest,—nor did rivers or precipices impede his march; the present was the fourth day since his misfortunes overtook him, and he had, during that period, only once before tasted food; his wish was to enter into the service of some chief who would afford him food, raiment, arms, and Englishmen to cope with,—and starting to his feet, he exclaimed, "By the Holy Apostles, Dugald Græme, who never broke faith with friend or foe, shall exchange with him the right hand of fidelity as a brother, obey him as a servant, and follow him through the world as a slave."

The laird replied, that he deeply felt for his sorrows—and the more so, as they were of a kind to

preclude all hope of redress. He stated, that though the limited nature of his establishment put it out of his power to make any augmentation to it, yet that he should be received as a welcome guest, for such time as he might feel disposed to remain. He enquired, however, if he had no chief to whom he was bound in terms of feudal amity, who could have assisted him in his present emergency? Græme, for so we may now call him, replied, that it was his misfortune to have been an inhabitant of a part of that territory, known on the border of Scotland by the common appellation of Debateable-land; and his friends, though both numerous and powerful, had been so unfortunate on a recent occasion, as to incur the displeasure of their sovereign;—and, although it would have been an easy thing for them to have justified themselves before an impartial tribunal, yet, that their enemies, having for the time complete possession of the royal ear, had, by circulating a series of plausible falsehoods to their prejudice, rendered it extremely hazardous for them to place their persons and properties at his disposal, till a favourable opportunity for undeceiving him should offer itself; that they had in conse-

quence withdrawn to the south side of the border, and placed themselves under the protection of the king of England, where they intended to remain till better times came about.

While making this communication, Græme could not avoid observing a cloud of suspicion gradually condensing and hovering around M'Culloch's brow, which at last settled into a dark gloom, that overspread the whole of his manly features. He instantly became sensible of the mischief he had done, and hastened to remove it. He concluded by observing, that for his own part, as he had not been actively concerned in the measures which gave such offence at court, he preferred remaining at home, to becoming an alien and incurring a sentence of forfeiture, and that his defenceless state had invited the cupidity of the plunderers, which to him had been attended with such disastrous consequences.

During the following, and a few subsequent days, Græme moved about the castle like a spectre. A settled melancholy had invaded his bosom, and was sweeping his whole mental energies before it. He was often alone, and when discovered, was always

in tears. He seldom spoke, and if addressed by any of the inmates, always replied with a gracious smile lighting up his countenance, and in language too studied and courtly for the occasion. At last, however, his despondency began gradually to give way;—he seemed once more disposed to mingle in the concerns of active life; he joined the retainers and servants of the house in their usual avocations, and lent his willing assistance in the performance of even the most menial offices. He appeared particularly ambitious on these occasions of attracting the attention of the laird, and ultimately succeeded to the utmost extent of his wishes. He took the department of the stable under his own immediate management; he arranged and new modelled every thing;—the skins of the horses began, from constant friction, gradually to lose their tawdry appearance, and to assume that hue which is the result of proper attention. Nor was the reform, so rigorously set on foot, limited to the cavalry alone. The housings and accoutrements were carefully examined, and underwent a thorough repair, and every thing connected therewith placed in the most serviceable state.

The armoury next was subjected to a strict scrutiny. All those arms that were good, both offensive and defensive, were polished till they shone like a mirror, and the laird could not help admiring the address with which Græme could clinch a rivet or head a spear. Thus he went on, repairing the bad, and cleaning and burnishing up the whole, till every separate article it contained was fit for immediate use.

Nor did the castle itself escape the investigation of the officious stranger. He from time to time offered the most judicious remarks on its defences, and suggested certain improvements which appeared so self-evident, that they were adopted immediately. The ditch, which, though capacious, being only a dry one, he filled with water, by diverting a small stream out of its original channel, into it. He caused flanking towers to be built in the angles of the wall that surrounded the court-yard.—In short, his ascendancy was by this time so firmly established, that he had only to suggest improvements to ensure their being adopted without farther question. There seemed to exist betwixt the laird and him, a kind of tacit compact, to which each

party adhered without farther explanation. Although bearing no official rank in the house, either as a retainer or servant, he nevertheless appeared by this time to have become as effective a member of the establishment as either; and in these simple days, when the whole household were placed at the same table, without farther respect to persons than what arose from arrangement, Græme even there was permitted to hold the same equivocal rank which was conceded to him elsewhere. Although not admitted to the dais, nor beneath the canopy, he was nevertheless seated above the salt.

From the day he became an inmate of the castle, he studiously evaded every attempt to elicit farther information from him, respecting his own affairs. Although on his first arrival, he seemed to court enquiry, and was all apparent openness and candour, yet these traits of his character soon gave way to those of evasion and reserve. When the question put, was of such a tendency as to require a direct answer, he generally replied, that every recurrence to his misfortunes brought along with it such a torrent of mental laceration, that it quite unhinged him for a day

afterwards. He, therefore, begged a respite for a short time, till he could so far master his feelings, as to endure the probe without wincing under its infliction.

On one occasion, the lady of the mansion enquired what family his wife belonged to. He started as if a burning arrow had pierced his brain; his countenance became pale as ashes; large drops of cold sweat hung like globules from his cadaverous forehead; and his whole frame shook with agony. At last, by a desperate effort, he recollected himself so far as to reply, "that her name was Scott." The lady, who witnessed the intensity of his sufferings, apologised for the pain she had unintentionally given him, and studiously avoided every allusion to the subject in future.

CHAP. II.

"In joyous youth, what soul hath never known
Thought, feeling, taste, harmonious to its own,—
Who hath not paus'd while Beauty's pensive eye
Ask'd from his heart the homage of a sigh.—
Who hath not owned, with rapture-smitten frame,
The power of grace, the magic of a name?"

CAMPBELL.

ALICIA M'CULLOCH, the only child of the laird of Kirkclaugh, as has been said, was now in her eighteenth year; and although legendary authority in most instances, rests satisfied with a few sweeping assertions, condensing within the limits of a single sentence, every thing that can be applied to either beauty or accomplishments, yet on the present occasion, it has not left us to oscillate in a state of dubiety, as it assures us that she was superlatively beautiful;—that her features were moulded after the finest cast of Grecian outline;—that her

complexion was purity itself, sullied only by the presence of the faint blush of the opening rose-bud on her cheek;—that no statuary, from Praxiteles to Canova, ever moulded a Grace with such classical symmetry of person as that she possessed;—and no poet, from Solomon to Scott, ever embodied in one mind so much of female excellence as was found in her.

True it is, that we cannot speak with certainty as to the specific nature of the accomplishments, which gave dignity and grace to a form so fair. We may safely infer, however, that the following were amongst the number:—She was deeply skilled in the vulnerary and medicinal qualities of every plant and lichen that grew on her native mountains; and from them she composed salves and tinctures, embrocations and febrifuges, laden with which, she visited the couch of pain and the bed of sickness, and like a ministering angel, came with healing under her wings.

She also possessed the secret of extracting from the vegetable world, every tint and shade that nature has scattered with profusion over the face of creation. She could impart to the fleeces

of her father's flocks the flaunting verdure of the summer's forest, as well as the sear and yellow hue of autumn. The crimson glories of the evening clouds, and the lovely azure of the midnight sky, all gave out their hues at her magical touch. Even the social rainbow, in its futile attempts to unite mountain to mountain, in the fleeting and evanescent grasp of worldly friendship, could not elude her research, but was plundered of its prismatic dyes to adorn the shoulders of some rustic retainer.

Of her literary acquirements, little can be said, as our readers need scarcely be informed, that at the period alluded to in our legend, books were all in manuscript. It may naturally be inferred, therefore, that her father's library was not very extensive. She had read, however, the legend of Saint Winnifrede, with that of Saint Rosalie and Saint Cecilia; and smile not, gentle reader, when we add to the catalogue, the equally holy names of Saint Balaam and Saint Nimrod—for each of these worthies, at one period, shone resplendent in the lists of canonization.

That a form so fair, and a mind so richly stored with all the learning of the times, should have

been permitted to grow up like a flower in a desert, without a sigh being wafted to her bower window, or a spear broken in honour of her, would have been a stain on the gallantry of the age she flourished in:—but such was not the case; for many a youthful aspirant laid his fortune and titles at her feet; and many a ruddy cheek was blanched with despair, as he turned his charger's head round to take a farewell glance at the lofty turrets of Kirkclaugh, and of the proud insensible beauty who had rejected his suit.

Dugald Graeme possessed a tall, elegant figure; a set of regular, though pale features; long flowing locks, that spread over his shoulders, as dark as the raven's wing, and quick piercing eyes, that seemed to read the hand-writing of nature on the tablets of the heart, and to detect the vagrant idea while it flitted through the regions of the brain, ere the wand of reason had embodied it in a tangible shape. He appeared to be in the very prime of manhood, and might perhaps have been bordering on forty years of age; although his smooth forehead, and erect carriage, would not have set him down for much more than thirty. With all

this, however, he had a something of lurking suspicion in his profile,—a kind of sinister glance in his dark eye, which, although it did not strike an ordinary observer at first sight, yet when once discovered, made an impression never to be erased.

He was now, to all intents and purposes, considered as a permanent inmate of the castle; nay, he was become so necessary to the laird, that no undertaking, even of the most trifling nature, was finally resolved on, till it had received his previous sanction.

Notwithstanding the unlimited confidence thus placed in him, he avoided every thing that, in the slightest degree, could induce a belief that he was acting on his own responsibility. He made a most ostentatious parade of the deference he paid to the laird's orders, and was constantly applying for instructions in affairs, though of themselves of the most trivial import. To the lady and Alicia, he was all humility and condescension; he seemed ever on the alert to serve and oblige them; he never addressed them but with cap in hand, and in the most respectful terms;—he was constantly lying in wait for opportunites of affording them an

agreeable surprise, and in one instance, he succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations.

Alicia, like the ladies of that period, was enthusiastically attached to field sports, particularly hawking; and the attention she paid to the feeding and training her birds, was one of the principal sources of amusement she enjoyed. On the face of the precipice, directly below the castle, a pair of beautiful falcons, of the genuine breed, had for many years built their nest, and reared their young with perfect safety. The place they had judiciously selected for that purpose, had hitherto been considered as altogether inaccessible. On the preceding season, Alicia had expressed a wish to possess one of them, and a favourite page, anxious to render her a service, had rashly ventured to reach the dangerous eyrie, when his hold giving way, he was precipitated to the bottom, and literally dashed to pieces. This fatal accident was a source of great lamentation in the castle, particularly to the young lady, who could not divest herself of the idea that she was in some degree accessary to it. All attempts of a similar nature were strictly forbidden in future, under the

penalty of the Laird's high displeasure, and the story was beginning to be forgotten in the castle. Græme having heard from some of the vassals the mournful narrative, determined in his own mind, that in defiance of the interdict, he would essay the perilous adventure, as soon as the birds were fully fledged. For this purpose, he contrived a ladder made from twisted raw hides, which, having secured at the top, he descended in perfect safety, and brought up the brood, which he presented to his young mistress. Joy sparkled in her eyes at the sight of the unlooked-for present, although she chid him severely for his rashness, and even hinted at the probable chance of having offended her father, by setting such an example of insubordination before the inferior servants of the castle.

Græme had sufficient tact to discover, that whatever offence he might have given her father on the present occasion, he had given none to her; or, had he even entertained a doubt on the subject, she gave him little time to remain in suspense; for on observing that he had slightly lacerated his arm, on turning the sharp angle of a rock, she took a richly embroidered scarf from her waist,

with which she tied up the scratch, telling him, that as he had been wounded in her service, he must keep it for her sake.

Græme dropt on his knees, and kissing the hemwith much seeming devotion, threw it gracefully over his shoulder, and rising to his feet, replied, "Lady I thank you; from my soul I thank you: you have much over-rated the trifling service it has been my good fortune to render you. I am a ruined broken man, bankrupt in every thing, but a heart overflowing with gratitude, for the generous protection afforded me under your father's roof: But lady, it has not been always thus with me.—I have seen the day, when in the listed field, I would have made the proudest peer in Scotland vail his bonnet to this scarf, and acknowledge the transcendent beauty and splendid virtues of her that gave it, or lie prostrate at my mercy. I am not what I seem—the finger of destiny has pressed heavy upon me. Had I acted the part of the flexible reed, and bowed my head before the tempest, it might have passed harmless over me; but confiding in my native strength, I stood erect like the oak of the forest, and was

shivered by its resistless fury. Had it been otherwise, I could this day, under the pennon of my father's house, have made an avowal, which, whatever might have been its reception, might have been made without presumption on my part, and listened to without anger on your's. I am fully aware of the apparent disparity between our several stations in life, but am not without a hope that a brighter morning shall soon arise, when the cloud which has for some time overshadowed my fortunes, shall be dissipated, and the fiat which has doomed me to exile and obscurity be withdrawn.—I see you are offended; but pardon my rashness, and never again shall I intrude my sorrows on your ear, till I can emerge from the darkness in which I am at present shrouded, and boldly display in the face of heaven the bearings and cognisance of my name."

"Rise, Dugald Græme," she replied (for he had again dropt on his knees), "I can grant no favour to my father's vassal, that requires to be sued for with such humility. I am sorry that what I considered in no other light than a trifling reward for a favour done me, should have given rise to hopes,

that never can be realised.—You obscurely hint at attainted rank and dormant titles ; these are very improper secrets, if secrets they are, for a maiden like me ;—nor can the discovery ever lead me to consider you in any other light than as my father's bondsman, till he instructs me to the contrary :—for the present, what has past shall remain a secret with me ; but should you again intrude on my privacy, with such sinister hints, and uncalled-for confidence, I shall have immediate recourse to my father, who will not permit his daughter to be insulted with impunity." So saying, she retired to her own room, where she remained till the dinner bell summoned her to the hall.

CHAP. III.

The border slogan rent the sky,
A Home! a Gordon! was the cry—
Loud were the clanging blows:
Advanced—forced back—now low—now high,
The pennon sunk and rose—
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
It wavered 'mid the foes. Scott.

THE summer had commenced, and the repairs and improvements suggested in and about the castle were in full progress, when it was discovered that a number of additional artificers would be required to have them all finished before the winter set in. The laird applied to most of his friends and neighbours, for a few skilful masons and carpenters, but none could be procured. In this dilemma, Graeme hinted that a sufficient number of very superior workmen could be hired from his native place, were

it safe for him to go in search of them; but that not being the case, he proposed sending Angus Donaldson, with a letter from himself to a friend, who would engage, and send them with the messenger. Angus was a young man but recently taken into the laird's service, who had attached himself in a particular manner to Græme.

No other alternative offering, Græme was desired to prepare his despatches, and Angus to hold himself in readiness to set out at a moment's warning, which, after a long private interview with his friend, he did on the the second day, well mounted and armed, as the custom then was. He was charged with two letters; one he was to deliver to a person in Dumfries, who was to procure him a guide for the remainder of his journey, and the other to a celebrated border chief of the name of Armstrong. A sum of money sufficient to cover his probable expenditure, was also entrusted to his charge; and at the suggestion of Græme, a small present was sent, to propitiate the good offices of the border chieftain, and to render him more alert in the business.

With these instructions, and a wallet tied on the

saddle behind him, well stored with provender both for himself and his horse, (there being no inns on the road in those times), Donaldson rode merrily on, and reached Dumfries in safety on the day he set out. On enquiry he soon found the person to whom his letter was addressed, who having perused it, eyed the messenger for some time with a glance of keen scrutiny, and at last breaking silence, said, "Aweel frien', I find you are for the border, charged wi' a letter to auld Davie Snakeheels, an' I maun furnish ye wi' a guide; now, let me ask ye just ae question, an nae mair—do ye ken whar ye are gaun?"

"I know only that I have a letter to deliver to Sir David Armstrong," replied Donaldson, somewhat abashed by the abruptness of the enquiry, "and being a stranger in this part of the country, shall require a person acquainted with the roads to guide me to his place of residence, for which trouble I shall reward him." "An' what may the purport o' the letter be, that requires sic haste?" enquired the pertinacious colloquist. "As I am not confidentially entrusted with my master's secrets," replied Angus, somewhat nettled at being thus catechised

by a stranger, "I presume the information I have already given will be sufficient to enable you to do what is required of you." "Vera true, young man, ye say vera true; but in looking out for a guide to ye, what maun I say ye'll gie him?" "I shall in a great measure leave that to yourself," Angus replied; "Suppose I were to give him two rose nobles, would not that be sufficient?" "Aye, aye, the goud o' England; its rifer on the border than I hae seen it, the mairs the pity. Aweel young man, I maun just gang wi' you mysel', an' that them that sent ye kent fou weel; there's no anither man frae the tower o' Sanquhar to the gates of Lochmaben, that could carry ye to auld Davie's place o' residence, as ye ca't—for, mind what I say, there's no a clump o' hazle, or a tuft o' heather in a' the flow o' Tarras, but has been his place o' residence ae time or ither; an' yet he's aye to be found by them wha ken how to seek him—but ye're keepin' me here, whan baith yoursel' an' horse require rest an' refreshment, to fit ye for the journey that's afore us the morn." The guide, who appeared to be a man that had passed the meridian of his life, and who kept a house of entertainment on rather a limited

scale, now led the way to the stable, where, after seeing the horses amply provided with rations, he introduced Angus to the kitchen, that he might solace himself with such eatables and drinkables as the house could furnish.

In the morning they were up and mounted betimes and proceeding on their journey. Their road, for a considerable distance, lay over undulating pasture lands, intermixed with scanty patches of corn fields just getting into ear. About mid-day they found that they had gained a considerable ascent. They were now entering a country altogether pastoral; the signs of cultivation were becoming less frequent, and in a short time entirely disappeared. The travellers alighted beside a small stream, where having laid the wallet under contribution, and rested their horses for a couple of hours, they again set forward.

The guide now urged Angus to proceed at a swifter pace than they had hitherto done, giving as a reason that they had many a weary mile to travel before they came to their up-putting. "Do you mean to insinuate that we shall not reach the end of our journey this evening?" enquired Angus. "We

may reach the en' o' our journey sooner than wad be guid for us," replied the guide; "an' gin we dinna get aff this waste afore the sun sets, there's nought mair likely to happen us." So urged, Angus and his companion gave their horses the rein, and proceeded at a round pace for a few hours, exchanging only monysyllables occasionally. At last the guide, pulling up his jaded charger, said they might now proceed more leisurely, as they would soon reach their quarters for the evening.

They seemed insensibly to have passed over the highest swell, that forms the boundary line between the eastern and western shores of the kingdom. The descent which, in the first instance, was almost imperceptible, had now become sudden and irregular—small patches of stunted trees fringed the declivities of the mountains, increasing in number and magnitude as they approached the plain, till at last, on turning an angle of the road, a beautiful forest scene opened to their view. Nothing could be more picturesque than the prospect before them. Large open glades were seen piercing deep into the woody recesses, on which herds of red deer were brousing. A small stream descend-

ed from the mountains, which, after several meanderings, added its tributary wave to a river that rolled majestically to the eastern sea. At last they discovered, at a short distance before them, a house of considerable magnitude, though apparently fallen much into decay.

It had at one time been enclosed by a wall of great height, and full of loop-holes for archery, but it was now in many places levelled to its foundations. The court-yard had been paved, but was at present entirely over-grown with rank weeds, except a narrow path-way which gave ingress and egress to the occupants. The house itself, though not built in the castellated form, had nevertheless been capable of making some defence. The high narrow windows had been strongly barred with iron. Over the principal gate-way, was placed a stone escutcheon, whereon was deeply engraven an eagle with the waning moon in his talon, with this rude legend on a scroll beneath it:

"Licht, and lang Claws."

The remains of a ditch was still visible, which had surrounded the whole establishment.

"We rest here for the night," observed the guide; and without farther communing, dismounted opposite the gate-way, desiring Angus to hold his horse till he returned; and walking up to the door of the mansion, bestowed a few hearty strokes on it with the dudgeon of his dagger. A human face instantly appeared at an upper window, as in the act of reconnoitring, who, on discovering the claimant for admission, descended, and undid the bolts and fastenings of the door, and stood before him, a brawny, muscular man, rather above the ordinary size, accompanied by two large and fierce deer hounds. They joined hands, and seemed to exchange greetings of friendly salutation, conversing together for some time. At last the guide beckoned Angus to advance, and the *maitre de hotel* having led the horses into the stable, and placing plenty of provender before them, ushered his guests into a paved hall, where, welcoming them with much seeming cordiality, he apologised for the necessity he was under of leaving them for a little, till he made some domestic arrangements necessary for their comfort.

Angus being left alone with his guide, once

more interrogated him respecting the probable length of their journey, and how much of it was yet to perform; and received for answer, that these were questions to which no definitive reply could be given, till he had communed again with his landlord, as, on the information he expected to receive from him, every thing depended; but that if affairs turned out as he expected, their pilgrimage would terminate the ensuing day. He, however, in his turn, cautioned Angus against exhibiting any symptoms of impatience on his re-appearance, otherwise he might considerably retard, if not altogether defeat the object of their journey. Their entertainer now returned, and announced that supper was about to be served up, slightly apologising for the plainness of their commons, which, he assured them, should have consisted of more substantial materials, had he received any previous intimation of the honour intended him. On receiving the expected compliment that the venison was excellent, and the ale potent, he proceeded, as in continuation,—"but as I was telling ye, the laird's sair bested just now; an' it will be attended wi' nae sma difficulty to get ony speer-

ings o' him. Ye ken yoursel' he was ay rash; an' naething wad sair him, about a week since, but he wad gang o'er the border; sae he drew thegither the auld squad, an' ae fine e'ening, he took the moon by the horns, as we ca't, an' awa they set. But Jock O'Tamworth, (that's Scull-cap, ye ken), having got some information o' their intentions, met them at the Fyket-ford, an' a sair reckoning they had; an' though Jock was slain outright, an' his folks gat the waur o' the fray, yet the laird didna win aff scart free neither, bit was just obliged to return wi' nae cloured crowns than cloven feet afore him: An' than, the wardens hearing o' the out-breaking in the time o' peace, hae summoned a warden tryst, an' the laird maun appear, an' underlie the law, whilk wadna be just that convenient at the present time; sae I see naething for him but back to the Deel's Step-jain'-stanes at the Grey Mare's Tail, till the storm blaws by, an' than things will just gang on in the auld way again."

"But cannot I deliver a letter to him before he retires to his place of concealment?" enquired Angus. "That's a question am no prepared to an-

swer ye," replied mine host; "but sud ony thing happen afore the mornin' I'se let ye ken;—sae as ye will be fatigued wi' your journey, I shall shew you to your chamber, and gin needs be, I can waken ye." He then led the way to an upper apartment, and having locked the door after him, left them to their repose.

Angus could not help feeling a portion of alarm at the precautions of their landlord, whom he considered as in some way identified with the late transactions on the border; nor did his guide escape certain indefinite suspicions, that he was deeper in the secret than he wished it to be supposed. Suppressing these reflections, however, he threw himself on his couch, and sunk into a sound and tranquil slumber.

A few hours afterwards, he was roused by a loud and continued knocking at the door of the mansion, accompanied by the deep baying of the stag-hounds, and the clatter of horses' feet on the pavement. He shook his guide till he awoke, and having explained to him the cause of his alarm, they stole softly to the window, and discovered the whole court filled with armed men. "What

can this mean?" enquired Angus—"Na, Guid only kens," replied his guide; "it surely canna be the laird himsel'. He wad never be out wi' sic a following at this time; but haud your tongue a wee, an' we'll aiblins discover something." They were silent for a minute or two, when the guide began to tremble, and cross himself with much seeming devotion. "Who are they?" enquired Angus, alarmed at the terrors of his companion.—"Lord hae mercy on me, for am a dead man!" ejaculated the guide. "Its just Pate Forster himsel', an' a' the clumjaunfrey o' Fennick's at his heels; an' there's an auld score stannin' o'er atween him an' me this mony a lang day, an' he'll pay it a' afore we part.—Had the door been open I might hae made some shift, but now its a' o'er wi' me!" Angus, being a young man of a bold, fearless character, hastily replied, "Although I am ignorant of the cause of feud betwixt this Forster and you, yet I presume, my being found in your company, will place me in a predicament of equal peril with yourself; let us therefore try, if possible, we can make our escape;—if by no other method, the chimney may conduct us to the roof of the house, from

whence we may descend in the rear, and a few steps will take us into the forest, amidst whose labyrinths we may lie concealed till they retire; or should that fail us, we have arms in our hands, let us sell our lives like men, and not without an effort, tamely lose that which the feelings of nature has rendered of more value to us, than all other earthly blessings."

"Ye speak ye know not what, young man," the guide replied; "the house is beset on every side, an' escape impossible;—besides, what could twa unarmed men, with only swords in their hands, effect against sic numbers? An' mair than that, ye are in nae immediate personal danger, unless ye draw it down on yoursel'. They'll no injure you; only just conceal the letter in your boot, an' say ye are gaun to Embro' on your master's business, an' cam this way to see a' frien';—the colours o' your house, whilk ye wear, will bear ye out in your assertion; but as ye value ye're life, mention not Davie Armstrong. I hear them coming, sae, mind my instructions, while I dern mysel' in the corner a wee, till I see the last o't."

Heavy footsteps were now heard approaching;

the door opened, and the landlord entered, introducing a short, square-built man, cased in a full suit of plate armour, and followed by a considerable retinue, who remained outside the door: he advanced into the middle of the room, and eyeing Angus for some time, at last in the broad Doric of the Northumbrians, enquired, "Whear comes tow frea, lad, an' what's tow doing here?" Angus, no ways abashed, replied, that he was a servant of the laird of Kirkclaugh, in Galloway, travelling on his master's business to Edinburgh; and that, having made a considerable deviation for the purpose of visiting a friend, he had been benighted where he then was, and had prevailed on the landlord to accommodate him till the morning.—"Tow speaks weal an' freely, lad, but there's twea horses in the stable, whea belongs the seeand tea." Angus readily replied that he belonged to his guide. "Tow mea be vera rit agean, lad, but whears this guide o' thine? I want meetily to sea him." When, casting his eyes enquiringly around, he espied him in a dark corner, and seizing him by the arm, he said, "Come forrit to the leet, lad, and let me look at tea."—He had no sooner obtained a full view, than he exclaimed

"Hah, my auld frien' Symmie Johnston! By the beans o' Saint Becket am glead to sea tea; I thout tow wad nea be that far aff, and my whitefeut in tea steable. I hae lang lookit for tea, and now I hea fund tea, weas mak a clear reckoning afore wea peart. It was a jade's trick tow served, nea; but this meating peas for a'.—If tow has ony ill bleed atween thy Maker and thea, meak it up as fast as tow can, for its now clear dea lect, and gin tow sees the sun rise, may I never cross the Twead again."—And addressing some of those at the door, he said, "Tell tea jumper to get a halter, an' look out for a convenient tree, and hea every thing ready, an we'll be wea him in five minutes."

During this address Simeon Johnston appeared to be struggling under the influence of some master passion, and his countenance bore pregnant marks of the presence of feelings, even more potent than those that are the legitimate offspring of terror alone.—At last, by a desperate effort, he obtained the ascendancy over them in so far as to reply, in a subdued voice, "Sir Patrick Forster, we ken ane anither, an' that very knowledge is sufficient to inform me what I hae to expect at your hands.

Ye hae the power, an' nae doubt will use it in a manner beseeming your character. Ae thing, however, ye seem to hae forgotten, whilk is, that whan ye burnt my father's house, and didna lea'e him a fourfooted animal, except ae auld collie, on that vera day I had your ain bairn doun an' my sword at his throat. I could nae strike him he made siccan a main, but just let him up, and helpit him on his yaud, an' bade him flee for his life."—"Stop whear tow is," roared out Forster; "tow heas said enough to seal thy doom, had tow dean nea thing else.—What steat did tow send him heam in—teal nea that?—Wi' yean o' his hough shineas cut, which mead him leam for life—tow hangs for that, had tow dean nea mear."

"It was nae dune by me," replied Simeon; "nor can I be answerable for the mischief a man meets wi' in the heat o' combat."

"Tow says true thear agean, lad; but if it was nea thee, it was a Johnston, and whean a Johnston deas a fault, and a Johnston's hanged for it, if that binna law and justice beath, I kenna what is; sae bring him alang sum o' yea, for I hea nea mear time to weast in argument."

Some of the retainers now rushed in, and seizing him by the collar, were dragging him forward, when he turned round to the knight, and, with much solemnity in his manner, said,—"Sir Patrick, I know ye to be a blood-thirsty man, an', being in your power, I expeck nae mercy; but nearly terminated as the thread o' my existence appears to be, I hae a presentiment on my mind that your's is still nearer, an' that there is a figure in your horoscope whilk tells me I shall outlive you." Then turning to Angus, he said,—"tell them that sent you what has befa'en me, an' gang whar I tauld ye for an answer."

Forster turning sharp round at this address, said, "Come tow alang tea, lad, we may need thy help tea bury him."

Angus replied, that he must proceed on his journey and could not be detained—and even ventured to protest against the summary execution of his guide; but Forster cut him short with "Keep thea meuth shut, lad, an mind tou's nea in Galloway, or thear ar mear halters whear that yean cam frea."

Angus thus cautioned, followed the procession

in silence till they had advanced a little way into the forest, where they found the jumper with the apparatus all ready. Angus thought he discovered his guide cast an inquiring look at the landlord, which was replied to by one of deep meaning;—the horses were left in the court-yard under a guard.

"Now, up wea him without delay," cried Forster; "or we'll soon bea ower lang here." While the jumper was adjusting the halter on the bough, an arrow pinned his hand to the tree. The wretch roared out in agony, and struggled with all his might to free it, but being unable, he called lustily for help. At that instant, another came with feller intent, and, striking a rivet in his corslet, made the fire flash from it, the shaft splintering into twenty pieces. Forster drew his sword, and was rushing forward to execute his sentence in a summary manner, when a third shaft winged with fate arrested his progress;—it struck him on the temple, and buried its point in his brain.

A cry of treachery arose—the band assembled around their wounded chief—they extracted the arrow, but life was fled for ever. At that in-

stant, a body of armed men rushed through one of the openings.—The Forsters, nothing behind them in courage, placed their dead captain beneath the tree, and forming in front of him, a most furious contest ensued, which ended in the total discomfiture of the invaders, and the capture of a number of prisoners and most of the horses.

During the conflict, Angus and his guide, who were kept separate by a guard set over them, made several ineffectual attempts to escape; but, finding that impossible, they were constrained to become passive spectators of a struggle in which they would gladly have taken a part, as on it the life of the one and the liberty of the other in all probability depended. At last, however, when the issue became no longer doubtful, their guard fled, leaving them to themselves. Angus immediately untied the guide's hands, and suggested the propriety of making their escape. He was, however, informed that flight was no longer necessary, as the victors were their friends, and the leader the person they were in quest of. Rejoiced to hear that their journey was to terminate so soon, Angus proposed going up and delivering his cre-

dentials immediately. Against this, Johnston remonstrated, saying, that, as soon as wanted, they wad be sent for;—he added, that the knight was chafed at present, "and wad may be no receive them sae graciously as he behoved to do when the bluid was anes aff his hands—but bide ye here awee, an I'll step ower an' pit in a word for us baith.—I saw a guid strong stump o' a naig among the bestial in the yard, as I was brought here, an' I wad like to tack him hame wi' me if Davie wad gie consent;—a body wad need something to mak up for the jeopardy they war in."

So saying, he left Angus and joined the knight and his party. There seemed to pass greetings of joyful recognition between Johnston and the victors, to most of whom he appeared to be known; and even Sir David shook him kindly by the hand, and, walking aside, they had a conversation of some length. At last he returned and informed Angus that "his errand wad be done instantly."

Angus congratulated him on the miraculous escape he had made, from what appeared certain

death. "I freely own," Johnston replied, "that I was in nae sma peril; but," he added, "let me tell you, young man, your danger was little less eminent than mine—for, had they hanged me as they proposed, the reversion o' your life wadna a sell't for half an hour's purchase, as, in the present instance, they had deeper cause for sae doing than ye are aware o'; for the warden o' the English marches, concluding, no without some show o' reason, that Snake-heels wadna keep tryst at the next meeting, sent the Forsters and Fenwicks to try an' apprehend him, wha band themselves under a solemn aith to bring him o'er the border, either dead or alive. For this purpose, they crossed the Tweed yestreen in the dusk o' the e'ening; but auld Davie had information o' the haill plot, an' sent spies, wha met them frae time to time, an' misled them wi' fause intelligence, till at last they brought them here. Forster, wha had the command, began now to discover that they had been deceived, an' wad a hae revenged himsel' on them wha had done it, but they had somehow made their escape.—Enraged that he had been rendered the dupe o' siccan a shallow artifice, he was re-

solved to do something that wad palliate, if not wipe out the ignominy of his disappointment. He questioned the landlord, who he considered devoted to his interest, but wha is a true Scotsman at heart, if he had seen ony o' Sir David's people lurking about lately. He received for answer, that he understood Snake-heels himsel' was aff to the Stepping-stanes, whar he kent weel a' the Forsters in Northumberland durstna follow him, an' that he hadna seen a living soul for a week past, except twa puir travellers, wha had arrived in the e'ening, an war in their beds; the rest ye ken; but, after discovering me, he was confirmed in the opinion that ye somehow or ither belonged to Sir David, an wad a hae acted on that belief had he no been prevented.

"I learned a' thae news amang my auld frien's ower bye there, an partly frae Sir David himsel'; an' it was just ae bit wink that our landlord gied me, that let me ken there was help at hand, an' that I wadna be justified the day, an' that gart me speak sae snell to them."

During this conversation, the conquerors were busily engaged in stripping and burying the slain,

dressing the hurts of those that were wounded, and collecting and dividing the spoil; refreshments were also served round from the house, and that in such profusion, as would have induced a belief that their guests were not unexpected. During all this time the travellers were standing at a considerable distance, without appearing to be either objects of curiosity or regard. At last the landlord approached the leader, and, walking aside with him for a little, was despatched to inform Angus that "Sir David waited for him."

He instantly advanced, and stood before a tall raw-boned old man with a grizzly beard, and coarse weather-beaten features; he was cased in armour, and was leaning on a battle-axe, with its head downwards. Mine host, stepping forward, said, "this is the stranger that wishes to see you," and retiring, mixed among the crowd. Sir David then inquired what commands he had for him, and was answered, that he was the bearer of a letter from a gentleman in Galloway for Sir David Armstrong, handing it at the same time. The knight received it, and examining the superscrip-

tion called one of his attendants, and withdrew to a short distance with him. They had a long, and apparently interesting discussion on its contents, often applying to the letter for information. At last they seemed to have come to some arrangement, as the privy councillor retired; and the knight, advancing to Angus, and with a something in his manner which he wished to pass off for affability, but which sat as awkwardly on him as a Hussar-jacket on a Greenland bear, said,—

"I have perused your letter, young man, and it pains me that I cannot extend the rites of hospitality towards you in the manner required by your friends. My regret, however, on this head, will be considerably diminished, when I reflect, that the recent occurrences will enable me to spare the requisite number of artisans, who will join you to-morrow morning with my answer to your letter; and my counsel afterwards is, that you return home with the least possible delay.—Have you any other commands for me?" Angus replied that he had, and presenting him the little sealed parcel containing the purse, he wrapped it

up in the folds of his mantle, and wishing him a good journey, withdrew.

Johnston now came up, and enquired with some anxiety when they were to set out on their return, and was rejoiced to learn it was to be on the ensuing morning. He seemed to insinuate, that the victory of that day would be instantly followed up by retaliatory measures on the part of the English;—that the death of Forster would set the whole chieftains of the north in motion, and would, in all probability, bring on a war on the border, which might require judicious management to prevent becoming a national contest. As Sir David had been the first aggressor, there was every reason to fear that he would be abandoned to his fate, if taken; and that it might be doubly dangerous for them to be found lurking about, after their interview with him came to be known.

In the morning, betimes, a body of twelve horsemen came into the court-yard, and were introduced to Angus as the mechanics that were to accompany him; and after making a hearty breakfast, the whole cavalcade set out on their journey; and having taken leave of Simeon Johnston at Dum-

fries, whom they left in high spirits, (he having obtained a grant of the "naig" from the knight at parting,) they arrived at Kirkclaugh without any accident, on the evening of the second day.

This addition to their establishment placed the family at Kirkclaugh on the *qui vive*. Dugald was in his element, directing and superintending every thing; the auxiliary workmen were "tall fellows of their hands," as Shakespeare would have said, and turrets and battlements arose as if by magic.

Yet there was something in the appearance of these strangers, which filled the inmates of the castle with certain dark and gloomy forebodings of occult evil, and which even awakened a feeling of distrust in the unsuspecting bosom of the laird himself. As the nights began to lengthen, they were frequently in the habit of absenting themselves, and not returning till the ensuing morning; and as they had still retained their horses, the animals were often so jaded and covered with mud, as to be scarcely able to move for days afterwards. Robberies, and even murders, were beginning to be talked of, but in districts too remote to include them, with any shew of justice, with-

in the periphery of the circle of suspicion. However, in process of time, those evils began to operate in a more extensive range. Wild, unconnected whispers were put in circulation, which, taken piece-meal, amounted to nothing; but when every detached fact or rumour, had brought its moiety of circumstantial evidence into the general stock, the sum total became truly alarming. One had seen them in the grey morning, pricking forward with their utmost speed, that they might reach their homes before the inmates arose; another pretended to have discovered them under circumstances still more suspicious, scouring through the forest with something in a sack, that for anything he knew, might be a dead body.

Whatever truth there was in any of these allegations, they had the effect of rousing the whole country into action. The youth of every parish banded together for mutual protection; the outcry became so general, that it soon reached the ears of the laird, who was thunderstruck at the intelligence, and roundly taxed Dugald with bringing a banditti into his employment, and insisted on their immediate dismissal, particularly as the

whole of the repairs being now completed, he had no farther occasion for their services. He desired him, therefore, to inform them, that on the ensuing morning he would pay them their stipulated wages, and dismiss them with a letter to their chief.

Græme was loud in their defence, asserting the probability of those who slandered them with crimes of so deep a dye, being the perpetrators, or at least abettors of them themselves. He most pathetically dwelt on the cruelty of returning strangers, who had left the bosom of their families at the command of their chief, to render him a service, with tarnished reputations, and a chain of unconnected surmises dogging them at the heels, and that on such slender evidence as the commonplace calumnies of a country, unsupported by even the shadow of proof;—that as they were deprived of the protection of their legitimate chief on the present occasion, he certainly stood to them *in loco parentis*; and it would be a most ungrateful return for the severe, and unremitting labour to which they had been subjected, to tender in payment only a draft on the exchequer of defamation. There was another consideration which

ought to be kept sight of on the present occasion:—This was the view Sir David Armstrong might be pleased to take, of the ill-founded charges exhibited against his people. He must either consider them guilty or not guilty; if the former, the summary proceedings of a criminal court on the border would, in all probability, render a number of innocent men the victims of unprincipled malice and black ingratitude; and if the latter, he trembled for the result. He knew Sir David well, and this knowledge told him, that he was not a man to be insulted with impunity.

He apologised for the warmth of his defence of the unfortunate strangers, which, as he had been the principal means of bringing on the present occasion, he considered to be due them. He begged M'Culloch, therefore, to pause for a few days before he dismissed them, that they might have an opportunity of justifying themselves on the spot, by looking their accusers in the face, if any such dared to appear against them; and if none came, that they might then be sent home with such thanks and rewards as their skill and diligence had so well merited.

The laird replied, that he could not, from the necessary measure of returning the men when he had no farther use for them, anticipate either of the extremes;—that although by these nocturnal rambles, they had certainly afforded grounds for harsh surmises, yet none of these had originated with him; that on the contrary, although till that day he had never heard, that suspicions of a criminal nature were circulated at their expence, yet, from certain irregularities in their conduct, he had previously resolved to discharge them, particularly, as he had no farther occasion for them; and his retaining them afterwards, might be construed into a juster ground of offence than any before stated.

Græme, whatever motive he might have had for wishing them continued a little longer in the laird's service, had sufficient tact to discover that his urging the subject any farther at the present moment, would answer no other purpose than that of transferring a portion of the laird's suspicions from them to himself. He therefore replied, that the laird was no doubt the best judge in his own affairs; and he hoped he would be pardoned if

zeal for his service had induced him to support a different opinion. As he had letters of importance to return by them, he begged their departure might be delayed for a single day, till they were ready. To this M'Culloch assented; informing him that he purposed riding over to Cardoness in the morning, to receive a sum of money that might be necessary in the settlement.

It may be proper to state here, that Angus Donaldson, of whom no farther notice has been taken since his return from the border, had, during his journey home, entertained certain vague, indefinite suspicions of the character of his travelling companions, from the occurrences that took place previous to, and after the battle; and from the dark, though guarded and mysterious hints thrown out by his guide, respecting the ubiquity of the personage they were in search of. He, on combining and arranging every circumstance in his own mind, came to the conclusion that Sir David Armstrong was neither more nor less than a border moss-trooper, proscribed by both kingdoms: and that the party he was conducting were arrant thieves, fleeing from the halter of jus-

tice, and who would be found ready tools for perpetrating any act of desperate villany in which an unprincipled leader might engage them.—Nor, in framing this sweeping, yet plausible hypothesis, did his quondam friend, Dugald Græme, escape with unsinged wings. Angus's attachment to him arose entirely out of the confidence he saw placed in him by his master,—and to the skill with which he executed certain handicraft, and menial labours. He saw that Græme was basking in the sunshine of the laird's favour; and he considered the acquisition of his friendship, as necessary to his own elevation; but although ambitious of distinction from his superiors, his principles were pure and uncontaminated: He had a strong sense of moral equity, and would have recoiled with horror from an act of palpable delinquency. And with all this, he inherited from nature, a portion of shrewdness which enabled him, at a single glance, to look deeper into the human character, than could often be done by those who had made the mighty volume their almost exclusive study. Add to this, he was a bold, daring youth, who shrunk from no adven-

tare how perilous soever it might be, could it be rendered the means of obtaining for him a little notoriety.

On his first becoming an inmate of the castle, he was singled out by Dugald, who, being an adept in the science of physiognomy, imagined he discovered a latent something in the bold forward manner, and free carriage of the lad, which, under proper management, might be the means of training him up a fit tool for the sinister purposes he had in view. He therefore availed himself of the opportunities afforded him of doing, from time to time, little acts of kindness to Angus, who, sensible of the distinction of a person so very high in the laird's good graces, met his friendly advances with a gratitude so sincere, and a heart warmed by all the kindlier feelings of his nature, that Dugald with joy discovered his labours were more than half accomplished.

Yet although he treated him with apparent confidence, he was nevertheless a veteran too deeply read in the school of dissimulation to commit himself, or any of his plans, to the mercy of Angus, till he had him more securely ensnared in the nettles

of that net he was weaving around him. As a preparatory, or rather initiatory step to the profession, to which he had in his mind's eye devoted him, he decided on sending him to the border, where, on various pretences, he was to be detained for some time, till he had acquired a taste for the state of society, that prevailed in that stormy outline of the kingdom at the period alluded to, and where, to a mind so constituted as he knew that of Angus to be, he naturally concluded that the wild spirit of adventure, which often stimulated the moss-troopers to deeds of desperate valour, would possess irresistible charms for him; and that, once mustered in their ranks, he would seek renown, without investigating too closely the crimes which led to it. This plan was rendered abortive, however, for reasons with which the reader has already been made acquainted.

When Angus was sent to the border for a supply of mechanics, Dugald did not entertain the slightest hope that he would succeed in his mission. All he wished was, that he should be placed among the retainers of Armstrong, till he should have acquired a relish for their way of life, and

to be returned when duly qualified, to act the part he had in his mind devoted him to; but when the unexpected flight of the border chief, and the dispersion of his gang, enabled Angus to return immediately with such an acquisition of force, it entirely changed the posture of affairs. Although he still wished to retain him in his interest, yet he had now ceased to be so indispensibly necessary to the accomplishment of his plans, as he at one time might have been:—and although Graeme knew, and was personally known, to most of the individuals from the border, yet this was a species of recognition both parties were on their guard against making, before any of the inmates of the castle.

Angus, whose suspicions had now been fully roused, both as to the character and objects of Græme and his new associates, was resolved, without failing in his attentions to him, to remain on the alert, and to lie in wait for something that might afford him sufficient grounds for laying the whole in a tangible shape before his master.

Acting on this plan, he so managed, that on several occasions he detected Dugald in close divan with one or more of his border associates, but

with all his address, he could never discover the subject they were discussing, although the earnestness of their manner, and the impassioned gestures with which their arguments were accompanied, convinced him the subject was one of vital importance.

He, on one occasion, concealed himself behind a wall, as they were apparently in hot altercation, and heard one of them say, "I'll tell thee what will happen, Dugald: unless thou carry thy plan into effect, and send for them immediately, they will join the Ellio.. to a man, and then thy whole plot falls to the ground." To this Dugald replied, but in so low a tone that Angus could only make out detached words, such as—"Cardoness"—"cross-bow," &c. "But," replied the first orator, "should Dick o' the Hasp miss,"—"Never fear Dick," replied another, "there's ne'er a buck in Ettrick could escape his bolt."—The conversation here sunk so low as to be farther inaudible. This was on the evening before the laird's projected journey to Cardoness.

CHAP. IV.

"——— And withered Murder—
Alarmed by his centinel, the Wolf,
Who howls his watch,—thus with a stealthy pace
And Tarquin's ravishing strides,
Toward his design moves like a ghost. MACBETH.

On the morning of that eventful day, Dugald was early sent for to the laird's apartment, and desired to make out an account of the sums each was to receive, that they might be settled with in the evening, and be ready to set out on their return early in the ensuing morning. This he promised to do, and was about to depart, when a servant announced that Angus Donaldson wished to speak to his master in private. Dugald's face turned pale as ashes; he feared he knew not what; he gasped for breath, and found himself, as he concluded, in the very jaws of detection—and yet there was nothing in the request to have given

rise to the slightest portion of alarm. O Conscience, what a white-livered poltroon dost thou convert us into, when our actions will not bear the touch of thy intellectual probe!

Angus was desired to walk in, which he did; and having made his obeisance, stood cap in hand without speaking. "You solicited an interview," said the laird; "what do you want?" Angus, glancing his eye at Dugald, replied, "we are not alone." "Tut, tut, why all this fuss; it can be only some trifling request, which it shall go hard if I do not grant thee; speak out, as I have no time for farther foolery." Angus thus urged, again turned his eyes on Græme, and twisting his cap into twenty shapes, was silent for a minute, till at last, addressing his master, with much earnestness in his manner, he enquired who accompanied him to Cardoness. "That is certainly a very simple question," replied the laird, "to attach so much importance to. Indeed, it is a point of etiquette I have never as yet thought on; perhaps I shall take a couple of domestics with me; hast thou any wish to be one?" "I certainly have," replied Angus; "and hope, instead of two, you will make the number twenty." "Twenty!" re-echoed

the laird, "dost thou intend to commence the siege in due form? What else could Sir Hector think, were he to see me advancing with an army at my heels?—Why didst thou not include entrenching tools, and other munitions of war?"—"Sir Hector will think nothing on the subject," Angus replied, "as he marched this morning to join the Knight of Lochinvar, who has summoned all his friends and retainers to assist him against some powerful border family, who have seized on some of his lands." "When didst thou receive that intelligence?" enquired the laird. Angus replied, that he "had it from a servant of Dunbar of Machremore, who had been sent forward to detain Sir Hector till his master joined him; but that the knight had set out before his arrival." "This must have been some very unexpected call," replied the laird; "but as he was fully aware of my necessities, he must have left the requisite sum with his lady; so make thee ready with all speed, for we will return to dinner."

Angus's embarrassment began to subside; he seemed to be goaded on by some occult necessity, that he dared not embody in words—his man-

ner became more earnest—he urged his request with something bordering on petulance, that at least ten might be permitted to accompany him, giving, as part of his reason, the disturbed state of the country, bands of armed men marching to join the contending parties. Here he made a full stop, and casting a withering glance at Græme, he added,—"and many other causes induce me, not only for your safety, but for all our safeties, to reiterate my request."

The laird was becoming seriously offended at his vassal, and replied with anger reddening his cheek, "Go to, thou art abusing our forbearance and forgetting thyself; it doth not become thee to dictate with what state we should travel: either get thyself ready to accompany us, or at thy option stay at home and another shall take thy place." Angus was again about to say something, but his master, waving his hand, commanded silence, and he slowly and reluctantly retired.

During the above conversation, the feelings of Dugald would scarcely have rendered him an object of envy, to a thief at the moment the halter was adjusting about his neck: He saw evidently

that nothing deterred Angus from impeaching him but his being present; and, as he was ignorant of the extent of the youth's information, or whether it rested on surmise alone, so was he equally unprepared to meet it, under either of these shapes. On Angus retiring without bringing any thing like a specific charge against him, he began to breathe again; and his spirits recovering something of their former tone, he said, if M'Culloch apprehended any danger on the short journey, he would gladly accompany him, and even order an escort of the borderers to ensure his safe return. Both these measures having, as he anticipated, been declined, the laird set out, accompanied by Angus and another servant, both well armed. The dinner hour arrived, and no appearance of their return; the family became alarmed, and a messenger was despatched in quest of them. He had proceeded but a short distance, when he discovered Stephen, the second servant, advancing at full speed alone;—his mind misgave him;—he hailed the approaching fugitive, and enquired what had happened;—the other reined in his panting steed, and replied, with tears, that their master was

murdered, and lay bleeding to death about a mile farther. "May every fiend in hell have a claw at thy carcase, thou vile poltroon," roared out the enraged vassal;—"thy master murdered, and thou there to tell it:—Who did it? and how did it happen?—Speak this instant, before I be tempted to extinguish the feeble spark of vitality thy craven fears have left thee,"—"Peace, braggart," Stephen replied, in a subdued voice, nor tempt me too far; "thou wilt require all that vapouring frothy courage of thine before long for a dearer purpose, or I am much out in my reckoning. At the request of Angus, I put on my plate-jack below my coat before we set out, as he had some suspicions of an attack. When, on passing a small patch of underwood, on our return, I heard the twang of a cross-bow,—the bolt hissed past me, and transfixed our beloved master to the heart, who fell, and expired without a groan. I flew to his assistance, and raised him up in my arms, while Angus drawing his sword, galloped round to an opening, where he was saluted with another bolt, which rung on his corslet,—and a third struck my bandalier, which it pierced, and buried

its point in my thigh, where it yet remains. I looked into the woods, and may I never eat bread more, if I did not see the skirts of the green gaberdine worn by Dick o' the Hasp, projecting from behind a tree. At that instant, Angus called out to me to go home and bring a sufficient force to have our master's body removed. As Kirkclaugh was no longer a place for him, he would return to Cardoness till his evidence might be required, so saying, he turned his horse's head and galloped back. Now, what more could I do?—I was wounded, and could not remove the body alone; nor was I left long in suspense as to what was designed me, for, as I stooped to lay it gently down, another bolt flashed fire from my steel cap. I then mounted, as well as I was able, and here I am." "This will be terrible news at the castle, Stephen;—who will tell our lady the fate of her husband?" "O, Dugald Græme, to be sure, if he has not made her sensible of it already." "What dost thou mean by that insinuation, Stephen?" "I only mean, that if he has not told her, he might have done so, as I am much mistaken if he had not certain forebodings about him, of what

might probably happen before we returned." "I recommend thee to bridle that tongue of thine, Stephen; for believe me, there are more bolts that fit the same bow."

They had by this time reached the castle, and the alarm had spread in every direction. Dugald, who was waiting the messenger's return at the gate, on hearing the fatal tidings, rushed into the hall, and uttering the most piercing cries, proclaimed the catastrophe aloud, denouncing the most exemplary vengeance against his master's murderers, and, in particular, against Angus, who, he asserted, had betrayed him into their hands, and then fled to escape the punishment he so well deserved.

"The insinuation is false as hell," replied Stephen; "there was not a trustier boudsman within the castle walls than Angus Donaldson; and had our lamented master taken his counsel this morning, he had now been alive. Had it not been for our steel-jacks we had both been sped as well as the laird;—see there is the dint of one bolt on my burgonet, and another is still lodged in my thigh; and I am much mistaken, if Angus were

here, if he could not shew an equal number of thy love tokens some where about him; however, let me counsel thee, when thou sendest Dick o' the Hasp on a similar errand, that thou furnish him with another garment than the old green gaberdine, with which we are all so well acquainted."

Dugald was for a moment overawed by the unexpected retort, and furnished in his person a rare illustration of the apothegm, that the most wary pedestrian, that ever trode the crooked paths of guilt, still left some invisible clue behind him, whereby his crimes were made manifest, and himself, like the arch-fiend under the spear of Ithuriel, rendered visible in all his native deformity.

As this was a crisis wherein the least evasion or sinking of the spirit must have been fatal to him, he quickly rallied himself, and returned to the charge with renovated energy. He made the most solemn appeals to heaven in testimony of his own innocence, and demanded that Dick should be confronted with his accusers. But Dick had acted a wiser part for them both: for, conscious that he had been seen both by Angus

and Stephen, he judged it most advisable to retire to his old haunts for a time, till he witnessed the final issue of Dugald's plot. People were sent in quest of him in every direction, but he was nowhere to be found.

The evasion of Dick at this moment carried with it a "confirmation, strong as proof of holy writ" that he was the guilty person; and Dugald, availing himself of this tide of public opinion, and glad of the escape of Dick, as things had turned out, became the loudest of his accusers, and offered the most tempting rewards to any who would apprehend him, either dead or alive; and several were despatched in the direction he was supposed to have taken, but all returned unsuccessful.

In the mean time, the lady and Alicia hearing an unusual noise and bustle in the hall, rushed in together to learn what had happened. They became witnesses of the frantic gestures, and clamorous grief of Dugald, who, without any delicate precaution, or tender respect for the rank or sex of the sufferers, gave a frightful detail of the particulars of the murder, as they had reached him. The death of her husband was all the lady heard of

the tale of woe. Recollection forsook her, and she would have fallen on the pavement had not the domestics caught her in their arms, and she was borne to her apartment in a state of insensibility. The lovely Alicia gave vent to the most heart-rending lamentations, and it was with much difficulty she could be prevented from accompanying the party, who were sent to bring home her father's body.

We shall dwell on the mournful subject no farther than may be necessary, just to inform our readers that the remains of M'Culloch of Kirkclaugh were consigned to the tomb of his forefathers in the churchyard of Kirkdale, with every honour becoming his rank and character, and attended by a long train of friends and dependents who deeply regretted his loss. His amiable lady, being a woman of weak nerves, and having been long in a declining state of health, never recovered the shock of Dugald's premature declaration, but lingered on for about a year or two, rather enduring than enjoying life, and having her whole thoughts tending towards that haven of rest, whither her increasing infirmities were rapidly hurrying her.

Dugald and his gang still continued inmates of the castle;—he had contrived to render himself so necessary, that his lady, in her present feeble state, found she could not dispense with his services, and the others remained till their arrears could be paid them, as the laird had been robbed as well as murdered. Græme, however, was respectful and attentive, and the workmen continued under his directions to strengthen and fortify the castle, till it was all but impregnable.

An occurrence took place about this time, which filled Galloway with mourning and lamentation. It was formerly hinted that Sir Hector M'Culloch of Cardoness had marched with all the forces he could raise to assist the Gordons of Lochinvar, against some powerful border family. These were the Glendonwynes, or Glendinnings as they are now called. The cause of the feud was this:—The Maxwells of Nithsdale and Douglasses of Threave, becoming jealous of the increasing power of the Gordons of Lochinvar, stirred up the Glendinnings to form a settlement, on a portion of territory that had long been claimed by the Gordons. Although that claim had

been resisted by the Douglasses, who asserted that a previous grant had been made in their favour by King Robert Bruce. The disputed lands lay along the eastern banks of the Ken and Dee, and at present forms a considerable portion of the parishes of Crossmichael and Parton. To reinforce their claims with a show of justice, the Glendinnings obtained a charter of said lands from Douglas of Threave, with a promise of assistance from both the Maxwells and him, should their title be disputed. Armed with such authority, and relying on the support of these powerful families, the Glendinnings came, and drove the Gordons out before them, taking possession of their lands and destroying their property.

The knight of Lochinvar, sensible of his own inability to cope with such powerful enemies, summoned to his aid all his friends and retainers, to enable him to recover his invaded territory. Among those who joined him from the lower district of Galloway, were the Stewarts of Garlies, the Dunbars of Machermore, the Gordons of Muirfad, the M'Cullochs of Barholm, the knight

of Cardoness, the Carsons of Rusco, and the Lennoxes of Plunton.

Nor were the Glendinnings idle. They saw the storm approaching, and made every preparation the emergency rendered necessary, as independent of the two great families before mentioned, they called in to their aid the Lord Herries, and the tutor of Bombie; and from the border came a strong division of Johnstons. With these reinforcements they awaited the Gordons.

The battle was fought on the banks of a small stream that forms the boundary line between the parishes of Crossmichael and Parton, the place to this day bearing the name of the Spear-ford, and was maintained with desperate valour on both sides for some time. It ended, however, in the total discomfiture of the Gordons. The knight of Lochinvar being slain, as well as the knight of Earlston, the knight of Cardoness, M'Culloch of Barholm, Gordon of Muirfad, and many others of note.

Nor had the victors much cause for exultation, as there were slain on their side, Maxwell of Nithsdale, Maxwell of Munches, the chief of the

Glendinnings, and two of his brothers, with others of equal rank.

This battle was fought about a week before the death of Lady Kirkclaugh, who, literally worn to a shadow, died of a broken heart, leaving her daughter an unprotected orphan, at the mercy of an unprincipled ruffian, and was attended with the most disastrous consequences to the unfortunate Alicia, as it deprived her of her two nearest—indeed, only relatives, from whom she could have expected either counsel or assistance:—these were her maternal grandfather (Gordon of Muirfad,) and Sir Hector M'Culloch. The heir of Cardoness being now a minor; and the flower of his vassals and retainers having fallen with their master, he was in no condition to have made a vigorous effort, had he felt ever so much disposed.

Indeed, such a concatenation of unfortunate circumstances following each other in such rapid succession, might have induced a person to believe, that the better genius of the miserable orphan had deserted her, and enlisted under the banners of Dugald Græme.

Willingly would she have left the castle, had she

known of an asylum to retire to; but where could she go? Lady Cardoness had fled to Kirkcudbright, taking her young son with her, and leaving the castle in charge of her uncle. Her grandfather was dead, and his son, being unmarried, lived with his kinsman for the time at Lochinvar; no choice therefore remained for her, but stay where she was, or seek protection in some religious house. The latter being the only practicable alternative left her, she gave it much of her serious attention, and had even made overtures to the black nuns at Wigtown for admission into their order, when the whole was rendered abortive, as will be shewn hereafter.

During her mother's lifetime, Dugald made the most ostentatious display of the deference and respect he paid to the slightest commands of the lady. He never ventured on a measure, even of the most trifling nature, without her previous sanction—never obtruded his opinion unless solicited, and when given, it came with such a force of reasoning, that it carried every thing before it. He by these means paved the way for that ascendancy, it was his object to obtain over the domestic affairs of the castle.

He kept the borderers constantly employed. He was never satisfied with adding to the fortifications, and extending his lines of defence farther into the country. He opened up a communication with the castle from the beach beneath, through the cavern. He built a harbour, and afterwards a vessel or two, which he laid safely up in it. And when she sometimes objected to the unnecessary expence incurred by such formidable preparations, he soon silenced her by exaggerated details of the unsettled state of the country, and the necessity there was for being prepared for the worst.

After her death, however, his conduct underwent a radical change. He began to act more on his own responsibility, became less obsequious in his demeanour, and even went the length of dismissing the domestic chaplain without Alicia's concurrence, on some trifling pretext; and when she remonstrated on the impropriety of turning away her father's old tried friend, he assured her he had weighty reasons for what he had done; that father Jasper was not to be trusted in these perilous times; and that he would procure one in a few days on whom more dependence could be placed.

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His next step was to increase the garrison, which he did imperceptibly, adding daily one or two strangers to it, till in a short time they out-numbered the retainers of the house. She again represented the injustice of introducing such a number of suspicious people into the castle without her concurrence.—She insisted that her father's vassals and retainers were amply sufficient for all necessary purposes, either in peace or war;—and assured him, that unless the strangers were sent away immediately, she would apply to her friends for a force to expel them. This last threat called up a sardonic smile over the granite features of Dugald, which instantaneously settled down into a form of portentous meaning, as he replied, "Lady Alicia, you know not what you require:—are you yet to learn that the Gordons are again drawing their forces together, for another attempt to expel the invaders; and that Archibald Douglas, with the Lord of Herries and the tutor of Bombie, meditate an irruption into the lower districts of Galloway, for the purpose of giving those in the interest of the Knight of Lochinvar employment at home. Your being a M'Culloch, therefore, will afford sufficient

grounds of quarrel for these warlike chiefs to take in your castle, and lay your lands desolate, unless they find you in a situation to repel force by force, which, if they discover you to be, they in all probability will not disturb you.

"Let this answer satisfy you in all time coming, that I am acting to the best of my judgment for your interest and safety; and believe me when I assure you, I shall always be ready to submit my conduct to the investigation of those friends you talk of, whenever they may think proper to call for it."

Silenced, though not convinced, by this specious reasoning, she withdrew to her apartment, having finally resolved to seek some safer retreat than the house of her fathers could afford her, on the very first opportunity; and for that purpose, she arranged with father Jasper before his departure, that he should go to Wigtown, with full powers from her to treat with the abbess for her final admission into the order.

CHAP. V.

Glenalvon.—So, Lady Randolph shuns me—by and bye
I'll woo her as the Lion woos his mate. DOUGLAS.

THE crisis of her fate was now approaching. She had made no secret of her intention of leaving the castle, and Dugald was perfectly aware that her carrying that measure into effect, would deprive him of the last shadow of a pretext for remaining behind her. It would have unmasked the whole of his plans at once,—*an exposé* he was resolved to avoid, if possible, as he had many jarring interests to reconcile before he could finally reach the point at which his ambition aimed. He saw that no middle course was left him to pursue.—One of two extremes offered themselves for his acceptance, and he did not hesitate a moment in making his election.

One day, he took occasion to send most of the old and faithful vassals of the house away, on divers pretences, into the country, where they would be detained till late. He then caused the drawbridge to be raised, the ramparts to be manned, and every thing put into such a state of preparation as if he expected an immediate assault. He then demanded an audience of Alicia, which being granted, he appeared before her with a considerable portion of apparent alarm depicted on his countenance, and informed her, that he had received certain information that the Douglasses, with a strong force, had invested Cardoness, which being weakly garrisoned, would make but a feeble defence, and that Kirkclaugh would be their next object, which, (thanks to his prudence and foresight), was prepared to give them a warmer reception; yet the chances of war were at best uncertain, and it was absolutely necessary, that before he subjected himself, and the brave men who had united their fortunes to his on the present occasion, to all the miseries of a protracted siege, she should confer on him some more legitimate grounds for adopting her quar-

rel;—that she had only one method of doing this, which was, by giving him her hand in marriage. True, he appeared only in the castle in a menial capacity:—he was nevertheless her equal; and were the cloud once dissipated that overshadowed his destinies, he could rank with the proudest knight in Scotland;—that she might object to the abruptness of this declaration, in reply to which he had to offer the urgency of the case, which left no time for deliberation; and finally, hoped that her good sense would enable her to rise above the little trifling coquetries of her sex, and do that with a good grace which the safety of both rendered indispensible.

During this address, the unfortunate Alicia was struck dumb with astonishment. She felt that she was in the power of an unprincipled ruffian, who had gone too far to recede, and who would permit nothing to arrest his guilty career, till he had attained the summit of his wishes. A sense of her own helpless condition rushed over her mind with such irresistible force, that it carried every other feeling before it, when, clasping her hands in an agony of despair, she cried, "O, that

I had followed my parents to the silent grave! I should then have escaped a fate which would render death, in its most hideous form, an object of desire. You insinuate that a chain of circumstances has linked our interests together, and that the sacrifice you require is necessary to our mutual safety: How we come to have any thing in common, except the air we breathe, is more than you have yet shown:—You came a houseless stranger to my father's gates, and was received and cherished, not as a dependent but as a friend, and how have you repaid his hospitality? Dugald Graeme, you are foully suspected of having been accessory to his murder. Can I ever become the affianced bride of a man over whose head such a horrid suspicion hangs, were there even no other objection; but, suppose for a moment that it was fully explained away, I have others sufficiently powerful to induce me to prefer the deepest dungeon in the castle of Threave, with toads and venomous reptiles for my companions, to a couch of state and silken canopy, on the terms you offer. I again repeat, that, with such feelings, we can have no communion of interests; leave me therefore to my

fate, I entreat—nay, command you, as no evil can overtake me of such a disastrous character as remaining here under your protection; or, should you avail yourself of the power which the misfortunes of my father's house has placed in your hands, at least permit me to retire to a place more beseeming my character, and I here offer you the castle and all it contains as the price of my safety." At last, overcome by the agony of her feelings, she sat down and wept bitterly.

During this address, Graeme became sensible that he had over-rated his influence over her, and that from intimidation he had nothing to expect. When, with all the pride of conscious virtue, she stood erect before him, the fire of indignation flashing from her eyes, and the blood of her forefathers mantling over her beautiful face, all villain as he was, he felt the force and dignity of her appeal, and the half-formed wish almost escaped him, that he had been worthy of her.

If at the moment he felt any compunction for the infamous part he was acting, it was but of short duration; for, curling up his lip into something he meant should pass for a smile, and with

all the self-possession he was master of, he in a tone of irony, replied,—" Beshrew me, lady, but Demosthenes was a fool—a drivelling idiot—to choose the tempest for his schoolmaster, and the waves for his audience, when his oratorial qualifications would have been subjected to a severer test, had he tried to out-rail a woman! I have little leisure for the sharp encounter of a wordy war; nor can I see any possible good likely to result to either of us by its being protracted much longer. I shall, therefore, content myself with simply informing you, that in one hour I shall expect you at the altar, where every thing shall be ready for the performance of the nuptial ceremony; and although your cheerful compliance may create an interest in your favour at some future period, yet your refusal will neither alter my plans nor protract your fate a single moment.—One word more and I am done:—You hinted something about certain prepossessions you entertained in favour of a dungeon, with toads and lizards for your visiting acquaintances. Believe me, lady, when I assure you, that you shall ever find me so much disposed to indulge your every

wish, particularly when it is so very *reasonable*, that, should you continue in the same way of thinking for twenty-four hours,—a circumstance, by the bye, not very likely to happen, it shall go hard, indeed, if I do not find you accommodations so much to your liking, without travelling so far as Threave for them." So saying, he left the room, using the precaution of securing the door behind him.

True to his appointed time, Græme returned. He found Alicia on her knees, supplicating the mercy of heaven, and deploring the fate that awaited her. She shrunk from his embrace; and grasped, with convulsive energy, the crucifix before which she had humbled herself. He tore the sacred symbol from her arms, and dashed it in fragments on the floor. Let us pursue the horrid detail no farther. The eventful day closed in on a scene of more unblushing outrage than ever darkened the page of history; and the morning sun witnessed the unfortunate orphan the most miserable of human beings.

From that day forward peace never visited her bosom more. She seldom left her apartment, and

was never permitted to wander beyond the precincts of the castle, unless accompanied by some of her ravisher's creatures. She never intermeddled in any domestic concern, but left every thing to the arrangement of those placed about her. She seemed to take as little interest in the affairs of the world, as if she had been an inhabitant of another planet, dropt on it by accident. In short, she seemed to be fast descending to that grave she had incessantly prayed for, from the day she first called the ruffian, Graeme, her husband.

Dugald having succeeded in his plans, even beyond his most sanguine expectations, soon threw aside the mask which he found it no longer necessary to wear. He possessed a castle whose strength might have "laughed a siege to scorn;" and he had garrisoned it by frequent levies from those hordes of outlaws that infested the borders of the kingdom—men nursed in blood, and reared amidst scenes of plunder and assassination.—The history of their lives would have been a libel on their species.

He commenced, therefore, his system of ope-

rations, and soon laid the whole district under contribution. The poorer classes were glad to purchase from him a precarious protection, or rather forbearance, while the more powerful banded together for mutual guarantee. He built a number of small vessels, and made several descents on the opposite shores of the bay, plundering the country, and putting all to death without mercy who resisted him.—From these expeditions he often returned laden with spoil ; and they answered the two-fold purpose of enriching him, and training up his banditti to be equally expert on sea as on land.

Six years had now elapsed since Alicia's miserable union, if union it ought to have been called, where there was nothing but compunction and horror on the one side, and unfeeling violence on the other. She bore Graeme one daughter, who was now in her fourth year. Her birth seemed to have kindled in the withered bosom of Alicia some little relish for life. The feelings of a parent fell on her soul like the dew of heaven on the parched rose-bud. She awoke partially from that mental slumber beneath which her energies were fast sinking, to

a sense of the new duties she was called on to perform; and the very effort seemed for a time to have arrested the uplifted dart of the King of Terrors.

It has already been stated, that she took no interest in the temporalities of the castle, nor did she ever mingle in either social or friendly intercourse with any of its inmates. The two female attendants were permitted to remain with her, as Græme had no object in removing them, and her time seemed to have been equally divided between her maternal and religious duties. She had fitted up a small oratory in one of the turrets, and here she retired as often as she could detach herself from her infant, and poured out her sorrows at the foot-stool of him, who has promised to be "the orphan's stay."

Father Gregory, the unworthy successor of the good old Jasper, was the exact counterpart of the Friar Tuck of Robin-hood:—he had stabbed an Elliot in a brawl on a recent occasion, and fled from the vengeance of his friends to the protection of his old moss-trooping companion, Dugald Græme. He was a valuable acquisition to the in-

mates of the castle, as independent of his professional utility, there was not one who assumed the jack and spear with more alacrity when a prey was to be driven;—add to which, he knew something of leech-craft, played on the rebeck, and could have emptied a flagon with the best of them. He made several ineffectual attempts to establish himself in the good graces of Alicia; first, by tendering his assistance in directing her devotions, and afterwards by contributing to her amusement, either by his musical or other rare talents; but she met his advances with the most freezing disdain, and declined his services in either of his two-fold characters of ecclesiastic or buffoon—she still bearing in mind the unworthy part he had acted on the day of her undoing. Piqued at her repulsive manner, he said one day to Græme, "By the spear of Saint Goliah, Dugald, the preparations of thy "lady love" for her celestial journey are on the most extensive scale:—hast thou any notion when she sets out?" Græme, fixing his dark full eye on him, replied in his formal, laconic manner, "that is a subject in which I am determined not to interfere, nor must *you*." This was

perfectly understood, and the discussion was suffered to drop, nor was it ever again resumed.

Although the birth of her daughter, and the maternal duties she was in consequence thereof called on to perform, seemed for a time to have arrested the progress of disease, yet the evil was too deeply rooted in the recesses of her bosom, ever to be eradicated. She felt that her days were numbered, and she hailed the hour of her approaching departure with joy, bordering on rapture. One thing only preyed on her mind, and became to her the source of much uneasiness, as well as deep reflection—this was the fate of her infant after her death. She wished it removed from this den of infamy, and placed where its moral and religious education would be attended to. For this purpose she preferred a petition to Dugald, that he would permit her to apply to either the lady of Cardoness, or the abbess of the black nuns at Wigtown, to take the infant Euphemia under their protection. She painted the impropriety of her remaining where she was, with all the force of reasoning she could command;—she gently reminded him of its being the only favour she had ever solicited

from him, and that he was equally interested in the child's welfare with herself.

Græme heard her to an end with impatience, and sternly commanding her to be silent on the subject in all time coming, informed her that his mind was finally made up as to the matter under discussion;—that he considered himself fully competent to the discharge of every requisite duty, without calling in the assistance of Lady Cardoness, or any other lady whatever;—that his views respecting female education happening to be in direct opposition to her's, he was resolved to give his own the preference, particularly as they appeared better calculated for the class of society she was likely to mingle in, than all the superficial embellishments that could be engrafted on her. After this explicit declaration, the heart-broken Alicia never resumed the subject more—indeed, her health declined so rapidly, that it became evident to those about her, she could not linger an inhabitant of this vale of sorrow much longer.

It might naturally have been expected, that had Græme possessed one kindly feeling in his bosom, he would have given vent to it on the present oc-

casion, when he beheld the victim of his unbridled passions sinking into a premature grave. Had any doubt remained on the subject, however, his conduct on the morning of her demise, set the question at rest. For as soon as he heard of her death, he left the castle on a predatory excursion with a division of his gang, and did not return till after the funeral was over.

As soon as the little Euphemia, whom he constantly addressed by the familiar name of Eppie, had attained her tenth year, he commenced his system of education. Nothing was ever to be seen in her hands but mimic implements of war; and his whole leisure was employed in teaching her how to use them with address. She in a few years made so much progress under the tuition of this best of fathers, particularly in archery, that before she was eighteen, she had been permitted to accompany him in some of his expeditions, wherein she gave proofs of the most undaunted courage, setting an example of intrepidity to his veteran troops, and adding a quickness and foresight in emergencies which often put to the blush the judgment of riper years. After she had for

some time been the constant associate of his gang, sharing, and often commanding, in adventures fraught with peril, her feelings began to assume a higher tone,—she became at once fierce, treacherous and vindictive, with passions that bestrid the whirlwinds, and alike unfettered by superstition and unawed by principle; she set no bounds to their gratification;—and to all this, she added a cunning, that might almost have deceived the enemy of mankind. When she had a favourite object in view, not attainable by open force, there was not a virtue under heaven, whose semblance she could not have borne till her purpose was obtained; and the next instant have stood forth the fiend confessed, in all her native deformity of character.

Among her father's bands there were many aspirants for the hand of this Galloviddian Thalestris, in marriage, and even some who, presuming on former services, demanded it from Dugald as their right. On these occasions, he set the matter at rest, by informing them, that Eppie had duties to perform altogether incompatible with those of domestic life;—that this arose out of the

peculiarity of his situation, as he, having no son to succeed him, had felt the necessity of training up his daughter in a manner that would enable her to supply the place of one at his death. It was self-evident, therefore, that a woman born to command all, must forfeit all title to that command when she became the exclusive property of one; and he was determined that for these reasons, she should never marry.

CHAP. V.

"Schir Jamie laye doune be the quhyte sea faem,
He fell asleipe, an he dremit ane dreime.
An' he saw ane schippe, decket wi' streimirs gaie,
Plowen alang yat waterie ley,
An' ane steil-clade Knichte on ye decke yid stand,
An' ane flickerin swarde in his dexter hande."

ROMANCE OF KING JAMIE I.
By Captain Hamilton.

LET us now return to Cruggleton, where affairs at the Castle demand our immediate presence. Ronald Kerlie, the only surviving son of the venerable and respectable Sir Eneas, was a youth of great personal prowess, and had on several occasions distinguished himself in the field. A feud had existed for many years, between the Kerlies of Cruggleton and a Sir Arthur Featherstone, a powerful chief, who possessed an extensive domain in Cumberland. Respecting the origin of this quarrel, no cause has been assigned, nor can

any thing farther be gathered at this remote period of time, than that acts of mutual spoliation had frequently taken place betwixt them, in all of which, Ronald conducted himself with so much spirit, as to call forth the approbation of his friends, who looked forward to the period, when, under his sole command, they were to make the baronial towers of the Featherstones tremble to their foundation.

His parents had frequently assailed him on the subject of marriage, and were most solicitous that he should make an election, as there were few families in the neighbourhood who would not have been proud of his alliance. On these occasions he studiously evaded giving a direct answer, and appeared most anxious to change the subject. His parents became alarmed, lest he should have formed some connection he dared not avow; and were most urgent that he would pay his addresses to a young lady they pointed out, whose rank, beauty, and accomplishments were unexceptionable. His father took occasion one day to press the question so home to him, that he could no longer evade giving a direct answer. He at last

acknowledged, that his declining the many alliances proposed to him, did not arise either from any apathy, or previous engagement on his part, but was the result of a singular and mysterious dream he had, and which had been so frequently repeated, that he could not help receiving it as a "supernatural soliciting."

He dreamed that he was kneeling before the high altar in Saint Ninian's Church, in Whithorn, when a peal of thunder shook the house to its foundations—the dome was cleft asunder, and an aged man of a most venerable aspect, descended and stood before him; his long flowing beard hung down to his middle, a pilgrim's mantle was flung over his shoulders, having a white cross on its breast; he had sandals on his feet, a naked sword in his right hand, and a pennon furled upon its staff in his left. He addressed him most courteously, and taking off his mantle, threw it over him. He next delivered the sword and the pennon into his hands, and said, "now go, and fulfil your destiny; the pennon will direct you whither."

At that instant it unfurled itself, and floated away down the transept, as if borne on the wings

of a tempest. As its huge volumes were flashing over him, he read the word *Ascalon*, in blazing characters on its centre. The old man waved his hand, and the whole scene disappeared.

Ronald now found himself standing on the bluff head, which forms the most southern promontory of the peninsula;—he heard the sea rolling, and dashing its waves against the base of the precipice on which he stood; here he beheld the whole face of the ocean covered with ships, as if an interminable line had been passing in endless review before him; the decks appeared to be crowded with armed knights, having mantles of the identical form as that he wore, and a pennon of the same description trembled like a meteor from the mast of each vessel. They beckoned him to join them, and courteously waved him forward with their hands; yet they neither shortened sail, nor sent a boat to bring him off. He felt such agony at the chance of being left behind, that his struggles awoke him.

He stated, that he had many repetitions of the same dream, with this difference, that the old man, instead of the mild benevolent countenance he bore on their first interview, had latterly assumed one

of stern severity; that he had reproved him for not obeying his first call, and threatened some great misfortune, should he hesitate any longer. After giving, he said, the subject every consideration, he could not help receiving it as a divine intimation, that he should take the cross, and go to the holy land, which, with his father's permission, he was resolved to do; and as M'Dowall of Logan was preparing a force to join the great armament of Christian knights, who were to rendezvous at Sicily, and afterwards to proceed under the command of the Prince of Baden, to relieve Ascalon, then besieged by Soliman the Great, he earnestly begged he might be permitted to accompany him.

Although this request rung like a peal of jarring discord within the castle walls, and though his parents were inconsolable, they having no other son, as has been said, yet such was the gross superstition of the age, that refusing his petition would have been considered as little better than open contempt of the Divine command—nay, would have subjected them to the highest ecclesiastical censure. They therefore gave a reluc-

tant consent, and Ronald, taking six attendants with him, joined the expedition, which sailed immediately for some port in France, where, having landed, they crossed the Alps, and travelling to Naples, embarked for Sicily.

It forms no part of our plan to follow these intrepid, though misled champions of the cross, through all the unfortunate vicissitudes of an eastern campaign. Ascalon was relieved, but at a price which paralysed their efforts for years to come; and what added to their misfortunes, dissensions broke out in their camp. This was only the natural consequence of so many leaders, and so many conflicting interests to contend against. The Prince, considering himself treated with neglect, although he brought the only efficient reinforcement they received, retired in disgust to Acre, from whence he embarked for Toulon, where his army broke up, each division marching for its native country.

Ronald, now Sir Ronald, (he having been knighted under the walls of Ascalon, for some gallant exploit he performed,) on his march through the interior of France, with the division to which he be-

longed, being a little in advance of his party, was alarmed by the cries of some person in distress. He rushed forward, sword in hand, and discovered a lady of exquisite beauty in the gripe of two ferocious looking freebooters, who were dragging her into the forest, apparently for the worst of purposes. He spurred his horse forward, and with a single blow, laid one of them at his feet, when the other fled, leaving the lady in a swoon. He ran to a neighbouring brook for water, with which he bathed her temples ; and when she recovered, he gave her every assurance of safety, telling her who he was, and that he was within hail of the division to which he belonged, who would afford her a safe escort to whatever place she might choose. She thanked him most courteously for the timely assistance he had afforded her, and informed him, that she had left her father's castle on a visit of a few miles, attended by only two servants, when they were attacked by banditti ; that her servants had fled on the first alarm, leaving her at their mercy ; and that while one part of them went in pursuit of the fugitives, two of their number were despatched to conduct

her to their retreat, where she had every thing to dread from such ruffians. The troops being now come up, Sir Ronald informed them of his adventure, on which the commander suggested the propriety of leaving an ambuscade in the forest, which might surprise them on their return, and thus be the means of freeing the country from such a nuisance. This being done, the remainder proceeded with the lady to her father's castle, where they were received, and treated with the greatest kindness, both on account of the service which had been rendered his daughter, and because the old Count had been a Knight of the Cross himself. The party, left in the forest, soon joined them, having surprised the robbers, all of whom they put to the sword, and found immense booty in their cavern.

Every species of amusement was resorted to, in order to detain the knights a little longer,—mighty hunting matches, splendid tournaments, and every other princely sport, that shed a ray of barbaric radiance over the gloomy ages of chivalry, in all of which Sir Ronald shone pre-eminent; and what stimulated him up to such gallant ef-

forts was, that he had now a legitimate object in view, to the attainment of which *fame* was necessary.

If the beauty of Rosabella had made an impression on Sir Ronald at their first interview, never to be eradicated, how must he have been delighted to discover that external beauty was the least of her qualifications, her mind being richly stored with all the learning and all the elegance of the age in which she lived. He felt that his future happiness must depend on the reception his addresses should meet with; and although, at their several stolen interviews, she had given him no cause to despair, yet it was some time before he could obtain permission to apply to her father. This, however, having at last been granted, proposals were made in due form, and after a host of inquiries and explanations, were accepted, and the nuptials were solemnized in a manner becoming the rank and dignity of the parties.

At length, however, the hour of separation approached, and many tears were shed, as the lovely Rosabella made preparations for following her husband to his native land. They reached Calais

in safety, from whence embarking for Scotland, they were landed at the Isle of Whithorn, where the knights, taking a courteous leave of each other, departed to their respective castles.

We shall, as in duty bound, follow Sir Ronald to Cruggleton, where his arrival was no sooner known, than the whole inhabitants became wild with joy. His aged parents hailed his return with rapture, blessing God for his safety; and his blooming bride met with such a warm and friendly reception from them, as left her little cause for regretting her beloved France.

Two short years flitted away on gossamer pinions, and the young knight and his lovely Rosabella enjoyed as much unalloyed happiness as ever fell to the lot of mortals in this sublunary state of being.

But nothing is stable in this land of shadows. Though the tide of time rolls forward with a resistless current, yet while on one day a single straw only is seen buoyant on its rippling wave, the next, it bears the wreck of a nation, dashing amidst its turbid whirlpools. This truth was exemplified at Cruggleton, around whose battlements

the clouds of misfortune began to darken. The old knight, whose health had been long on the decline, paid the debt to nature, and was gathered to his fathers in the church-yard of Cruggleton; his amiable consort followed him in a few months, leaving Sir Ronald sole heir and representative of their honourable house. He had one sister, who was his senior by a few years, and who on the death of her parent, wished to retire to a religious house, but was prevailed on by her brother to remain in the castle. One thing preyed alike on the minds of the knight and his amiable consort; they hitherto had no children. Agreeably to the superstition of the times, many pilgrimages had been performed, and many votive oblations made, and vows offered up at the shrine of St Ringan, but all to no purpose.

After a lapse of some time, however, his blooming helpmate was discovered to be in the way which "ladies wish to be who love their lords." This news, as might well be expected, spread a beam of joy over every countenance in the castle; her health was watched over with the most unremitting care, and "the winds of heaven were chidden if they

waved her sunny locks on her ivory neck." At last the critical moment arrived, for which every preparation had been made on the most liberal scale;—and—but why dwell on the mournful subject any longer than may be necessary?—it evidences no small portion of mental callosity on the part of an author, to linger over his catastrophe till he can send it forth laden with preliminary horrors. We, gentle reader, whose feelings happen to be cast in a softer mould, have from our infancy upwards, entertained a rooted aversion against every passion which tended to clothe the face of beauty in the drapery of woe, and have often, in the day-dreams of our childhood, wished for sovereign power, for the exclusive purpose of driving pain and sorrow, like the scape-goat of the Israelites, to the wilderness, laden with the sins and curses of the nation on its head. It remains only therefore to be told, that Lady Rosabella died in giving birth to an heir to the castle and domains of Cruggleton.

The funeral solemnities were conducted in a manner becoming the rank and character of the parties, and for a period, the knight appeared

inconsolable; yet time, which wears off the rugged asperities of our passions, gradually shed its soothing influence over his bosom; reflection taught him that he had duties to fulfil, altogether inconsistent with the enervating indulgence to which he had given way. He roused himself from this mental lethargy—this slumber of the soul, in which his energies were sunk, and once more busied himself in the concerns of the world.

His infant, too, became no mean auxiliary to the *bald itinerant*, in detaching him from the bitterness of his sorrows. It in a short time appeared to be the almost exclusive object of his regard, and gave an early promise of becoming every thing a fond parent could wish. His sister, on whom the whole management of his domestic concerns now devolved, shewed herself to be well qualified for the task imposed on her; and the worthy old father Jasper, after his expulsion from Kirkclaugh, being recommended by the prior of Whithorn, was received as domestic chaplain, and soon rendered himself an universal favourite with the whole family. Days and years thus passed away at Cruggleton, and if Sir Ronald was not again

happy, he was tranquil. As he was still young, several ineffectual attempts were made to lure him into a second marriage; but when urged on the subject, his constant reply was, that his affections were for ever buried in the grave of Rosabella, and that nothing was left him but parental solicitude and paternal duty.

CHAP. VI.

"I canna tell a,' I canna tell a';
Some gat a skelp, and some gat a claw
But they gart the Featherstones had their jaw,
Nickol and Alick an' a':
Some gat hurt, and some gat nane,
Some had harness, and some gat stane.'
Old Border Ballad.

ALLAN KERLIE was now in his eighteenth year, and if our legendary information is to be relied on, he shone a paragon of manly beauty and knightly accomplishments. He was the darling of his doating father, and the pride of the whole powerful sept to which he belonged.

The feud betwixt Sir Ronald and the Featherstones, which for many causes, had been permitted to slumber for years, by some accident was blown into a flame, and at this period burnt fiercer than ever. The Featherstones had recently made a descent on the lands of Cruggleton,

where they destroyed a few houses, carrying off the cattle that came in their way, and were guilty of some acts of barbarous cruelty, which, being deeply felt by the knight, he resolved to retaliate on them with interest. He made his arrangements with such secrecy, that the Featherstones were taken entirely off their guard; their principal castle fell into his hands by surprise, which after plundering, he burnt to the ground, and then retired with an immense booty, having sustained little or no loss.

The Featherstones, indignant at their recent disaster, and burning for revenge, resolved on nothing less than the total extirpation of the Kerlies; and that their means might be in some measure commensurate to the object they had in view, they called in to their aid the Caldows and the Dixons, two powerful families on the banks of the Derwent—they even made overtures to Dugald Græme for his co-operation.

Græme, smarting under the infliction of some recent castigation he had received from the knight of Cruggleton, readily entered into their measures, and engaged to effect a diversion in their

favour, with his whole disposable force, as soon as the combined fleet appeared in the bay.

Sir Ronald, no ways alarmed at their formidable preparations, of which he soon obtained intelligence, summoned to his assistance the M'Dowalls of Logan, the M'Cullochs of Merton, the Dunbars of Mochrum, and a few more of his brother knights of the cross, and with these he fearlessly awaited their coming. That he might not be taken by surprise, however, he ordered one of the stoutest and swiftest vessels that he had, to be well manned, and to cruise mid-channel over, and, by some means, try to ascertain the state of forwardness in which the enemy's fleets were, and the probable time of their sailing, but with express orders not to approach the shore too nearly. Of this vessel, Allan begged so hard to have the command, that his father, unable to resist his importunity, gave a reluctant consent, on his giving a solemn promise that he would obey the instructions of an experienced seaman, sent with him for the purpose. Guarded with these precautions, the vessel sailed, and returned in a day or two, without having made any discovery worth noticing.

This voyage was not (indeed it could not be), made so secretly as to escape observation, both from Cumberland and Kirkclaugh; and both being perfectly aware of the object she had in view, had, as if by a simultaneous compact, resolved on her captivity. For this purpose, Eppie was directed by her father to have three vessels in readiness to put to sea at a moment's notice, to intercept her, should she again venture out. The Featherstones had an equal number ready to slip and pursue her, should she again appear on their coast.

Altogether unconscious of their danger, the Kerlies put to sea the ensuing day, and had scarcely cleared the land when a terrible storm overtook them; the wind blew a perfect hurricane, and their vessel, after several ineffectual attempts to regain the harbour, was finally driven out of the bay, and was ultimately so fortunate as to obtain shelter in a haven in the Isle of Man, in a very disabled condition.

Eppie Graeme no sooner discovered them fairly at sea, than she loosed after them, and having the advantage of the wind, threw herself between

them and the land, by which means she cut off their retreat. The Kerlies, who witnessed the manœuvre from the castle, became sensible of the danger of their friends, and flew to the harbour, for the purpose of manning the remainder of their navy, and sailing to their rescue; but the storm blew so directly into it, that they found it impossible to put to sea. They had the satisfaction, however, to discover, that the Græmes were likely to suffer as much, if not more than their own ship, as they were not so well manned, and would never be able to bring her to action, were she otherwise disposed. They were nevertheless in the greatest distress on her account, and Sir Ronald was inconsolable for the anticipated loss of his son, accusing himself of rashness in permitting him to embark in such a perilous adventure.

The vessels of Eppie, for the reasons before stated, suffered most severely, and were in no condition to act on the offensive, against even a very inferior force. Gladly would she have regained Kirkclaugh, but the storm blowing from the north-east rendered that impossible. Such indeed was

its violence, that no alternative was left her but run before it; and after a day and night's severe struggle, they also found shelter in the Isle of Man, in a bay about seven miles from the place where Allan Kerlie lay.

He soon obtained information from the natives of the dangerous neighbourhood he was in, Græme's vessels being well known, as his plundering expeditions had been extended to the Island, whose inhabitants he had often laid under contribution.

As the injury Allan's vessel had received rendered certain repairs indispensable, and as he had every reason to expect an attack in his present defenceless state, he had at first some thoughts of soliciting the protection of the chief, within whose territories he then was; but not knowing how his embassy might be received, or if he even possessed the power of rendering him effectual assistance, and sensible also that the delay it might occasion would tend to increase the alarm at Cruggleton, he trusted that, by secrecy and expedition, he might get ready for sea before his enemy, who stood equally in need of repairs. He therefore

took measures that a few of the most material injuries they had sustained should be set to rights with all possible haste; and as soon as night set in, he intended to sail, and by changing his course, endeavour to elude his enemy.

But nothing could escape the knowledge of the ever-vigilant Eppie. She, by her emissaries, was soon in possession of every thing he wished to conceal—and had taken her measures accordingly. If she made such efforts to capture the ship, when she considered her so doing as merely defeating the object of the common enemy, it may naturally be concluded that these did not relax, on receiving information that the heir of Cruggleton was on board.—Joy flashed from her dark eye at the intelligence; she instantly suspended her repairs, and trusting in her numerical superiority, weighed and put to sea. Her fleet being on the western side of the island, she had a long point of land to double before she could reach the part in which Allan had sought shelter. During her short voyage, she could not resist the anticipated joy of victory.—Allan a prisoner and the Kerlies at her feet; the most extravagant ra-

som offered and refused; no equivalent to be received, except the unconditional submission of the whole sept, and surrender of the castle. Such were a few of the prospective visions that sported in brilliant succession over the heated imagination of the intrepid Amazon, as she wooed the western breeze with every sail, to bear her to her predestined victim.

She had now doubled that long salient point of land, which shoots to the northward like one of Spinosa's old fashioned bastions, and was beginning to descry the bay where the unfortunate Kerlies lay at anchor, when she discovered three vessels of superior force to her own, standing in for the harbour under a press of sail. She immediately recognised them as part of the fleet destined for the invasion of Cruggleton, and justly concluded that they had put to sea for the same purpose as herself. This was a most unlooked-for turn her affairs had taken. She became sensible that her prospects of future advantage from the approaching rencontre had for the time vanished into air.—Allan Kerlie once the prisoner of the Featherstones, would, in all probability, she suspected, bring about a peace

between the haughty families, when their united forces might be directed against her father; who was indebted in a great measure to the continuance of the feud for the impunity he enjoyed. She had heard much of the beauty and accomplishments of Allan, and the breach would perhaps be terminated, she supposed, by a marriage between the two houses. View this subject as she might, she could discover nothing that did not forbode evil to her father, without the smallest prospect of either present or contingent advantage. Under the feverish excitation of the moment, she at one time determined to join her forces to those of Allan, and give the Featherstones battle, and if victorious, to carry her first plan into execution. But a moment's reflection taught her that the Featherstones, in their present efficient state, were in all likelihood more than a match for four vessels of smaller size and inferior appointments; they having sailed that morning, and consequently escaped the storm of the preceding day. On her father's engagements with the Featherstones she did not waste a single thought—as she felt fully assured of his approbation of any measure from which the greatest por-

tion of immediate advantage could be drawn.—She at last came to the determination of remaining where she was, a spectator of the contest, that she might be ready to avail herself of any favourable circumstance that might offer itself.

Allan beheld the approach of the foe with a steady, but not a desponding eye. He lost no time in adopting every measure of defence his circumstances would permit, and both by his words and actions animated the drooping spirits of his friends. When some of them counselled him to land, and claim the protection of the chief of the island, promising to fight so long as a plank of his ship remained together, he rejected the proposal with indignation, assuring them in his turn, that so long as a man continued on board, who would bend a bow, or lift a battle-axe in his father's quarrel, he would stand by him till death. The Kerlies caught the enthusiasm, and kneeling before the sacred symbol of their faith, they vowed to defend him to the last extremity.

The Featherstones, confiding in their superior strength, came boldly forward, Sir Arthur leading in person; and hailing the Kerlies, com-

manded them to strike, on pain of being put to death without mercy. The only answer he received was a flight of arrows, which killed and wounded a number of his men. This was instantly returned, and a terrible conflict ensued, which, although most unequal as to the means of annoyance, was nevertheless maintained by the Kerlies with an obstinacy which long kept the scales of victory poised in an equal balance.

Often did the Featherstones attempt to board, and as often were they beat back with loss.—Allan, after performing prodigies of valour, and twice wounding Sir Hugh, was, in his turn, laid senseless on the deck, by the battle-axe of the chief. Thinking their young hero slain, the Kerlies abandoned themselves to sorrow, and the Featherstones, following up their advantage, were in the act of taking possession of their prize, when Eppie Græme was seen with every sail set, making for the scene of action.

She remained at anchor, a passive spectator of the battle, and could not help admiring the address and valour with which the Kerlies defended themselves. She saw the Featherstones

more than once fairly beat off. A feeling something akin to generosity awoke in her bosom; she yielded for a moment to the persuasive whispers of the mental stranger; and, under its divine influence, a prayer almost escaped her, that such gallantry and indomitable devotion should be crowned with success. But this was only an involuntary start of principle, an *ignis fatuus* of the soul; whose single corruscation illuminated for an instant, the more than Egyptian darkness that lay beyond it, ere it was extinguished for ever. The cupidity of Eppie would not permit her to let an opportunity escape, which, if once lost sight of, might never return. She well knew that no tie, either human or divine, was longer binding, according to her father's moral code, than till he found it his interest to break it.

Presuming on this, she was fully aware that her breach of faith with the Featherstones, would be amply atoned for by the capture of Allan Kerlie; and justly concluding that both parties were by this time too much exhausted to offer any effectual resistance, she resolved on making a prize of both. For this purpose she bore up, as has

been said, and, taking the Featherstones by surprise, ordered their instant submission. On hearing this most unexpected summons, the knight, on demanding to know who they were, and on what authority they hazarded such a peremptory mandate, was told that they were part of the fleet of Dugald Græme of Kirkclaugh, despatched in quest of a vessel belonging to Cruggleton, which, having discovered at anchor in that bay, it became their duty to carry home with them. Sir Hugh rejoined, that the ship having become his prize, previous to their coming up, set that question at rest; and farther, that Græme being in league with him, it must have been on his service the division was sent out. He therefore directed them to return to Kirkclaugh, and wait his farther orders. Eppie retorted that she knew nothing of any bond of union subsisting between her father and him; nor did she believe any such existed; that the Kerlies were her father's enemies; and that a vessel belonging to them having put to sea, she was despatched to bring it in;—and as she always implicitly obeyed her father's orders, she would receive the com-

mands of no other person as to a line of conduct so clearly pointed out; declaring, that if the slightest interruption was offered her in the discharge of her duty, she would assail him with her whole force. Sir Hugh, enraged to be thus schooled by a stripling, (for she was always armed and attired as one of her father's retainers,) put his ships into the best posture of defence their crippled state and his own weakened resources would admit of; and interposing them between her and his prize, awaited her coming. The assault was fierce, but of short duration; for, though the Featherstones defended themselves with vigour, yet the Graemes, led on by Eppie, cleared their decks, and became the victors almost without any loss. Sir Hugh being again wounded, was compelled to strike, as well as his consorts. During this second action, the Kerlies were rendered passive spectators, and in all probability might have effected their escape, had not the fate of their gallant young master paralysed their efforts, and rendered them incapable of acting with promptitude, till the critical moment had passed away. They were standing in a mournful circle a-

round the youth; and having taken off his light armour, were bathing his temples with water, when Eppie, having finally subdued the Featherstones, jumped on board and ordered them to their quarters on pain of death. The Kerlies, being in no situation to make farther resistance, laid down their arms, on a promise of liberal treatment for themselves and their chieftain's son, till they could be ransomed. On this, the Græmes took possession of their vessel, while the Kerlies appeared indifferent to every thing except the recovery of their young chief.

On Eppie's coming on board, she was forcibly struck with the beauty of the youth. His head was resting on the lap of one of his retainers. His eyes were shut; and his long flowing locks of the palest auburn, overspread his neck and shoulders in the most graceful curls. He had received a wound in his breast, which was in consequence thereof bare, and to which they had applied some simple styptic. She stood entranced over the lovely vision. Never had she beheld such a paragon of masculine perfection, a new sense seemed to spread its balmy influence over her

mail-clad bosom, and she became alive to feelings, of whose very existence she had hitherto been ignorant. She used her utmost efforts to restore him to his senses. She bound up his wounds, which were but trifling, and when, after the lapse of a considerable time, the glow of returning animation lighted up his brilliant eye, and the evanescent hectic, like the scintillations of the *aurora borealis*, trembled on his beautiful cheek, it sent a pang to her heart, to which, during the whole course of her stormy life, she had hitherto been a stranger. She redoubled her endeavours to accelerate his recovery. When he began to awaken to a consciousness of the objects around him, she contrived to make him swallow a cordial which soon restored him to the full use of his mental faculties; and when he was so far recovered as to have his present situation explained to him, she said and did every thing that could inspire him with confidence. She assured him of his safety, as well as that of his friends; and that however paradoxical it might appear, she had no other object in commencing the attack than his liberation; and in proof thereof, she had only to remind him,

that the Featherstones were her father's allies; that her present conduct would have the certain consequence of drawing down on his head the vengeance of that powerful family; that the evils, however, which might result from the steps she had taken, would be more than compensated by the opportunity afforded her of doing away, in some measure, the false impressions which the numerous falsehoods and exaggerations which were circulated in the country at her and her father's expence, were calculated to inspire. And to convince him of the sincerity of her professions, she declared his vessel at perfect liberty to pursue her voyage home, ransom free, only in her turn soliciting as a favour, that he would accompany her to Kirkclaugh as an escort, as the number of her prisoners exceeded that of her own people. She recommended his retiring on account of his wounds,—extolled his valour to the skies,—and commanding her followers to return to their ships, she remained with him for the avowed purpose of ministering to his wants.—She then ordered the whole to get under weigh, and returned to Kirkclaugh in triumph, with the richest prize that ever entered its port.

CHAP. VII.

" An' first she reined her prancing bay,
Syne shook her silver spear,—
'O leave your father's locks sae grey,
An' come an' be my dear.'
'O' I'll ne'er wed the green-wood queen,
Wha rides with jack and brand;
Nor ever grasp, in amorous clasp,
A maiden's iron hand.'"

YOUNG MAXWELL,
An Old Gallovidian Ballad.

THAT the beauty, and we may add, heroism of Allan had made a deep impression on her heart, has just been shown. She felt as if the dawn of an intellectual morning had arisen on her soul, and was hurrying before it those fierce and vindictive passions, which had hitherto shed only a lurid radiance over the brightest features of her by-past life. She felt that something else was necessary to her happiness than feats of arms, victory and plunder,—and she was resolved on its attainment,

no matter by what means. And yet on turning the subject in her mind, she could discover nothing but difficulties of the most formidable character, which, like the centinels round an enemy's camp, stood in grizzly armour to bar the path which led to the consummation of her wishes. On a first view, however, one would be naturally led to conclude, that the difficulties so much dwelt on, were rather the spectres of her own fancy, than the sober realities of active life. Allan was her prisoner, and consequently in her power; and she fondly clung to the hope, that no alternative would be so dreadful to him as being delivered up to her father. She was besides but a very few years his senior; of a tall majestic stature; with features, (which, according to her own ideas of female beauty), were not inelegant; a clear brown complexion, heightened by her constant exposure to the elements; of an athletic make; with an eye brilliant as a sunbeam, and piercing as that of the eagle of her native mountains.

With such personal qualifications, her vanity whispered she had little to dread—but still a doubt of a more formidable character obtruded itself on

her cogitations.—Where could they retire to—or what power could protect them from her father's vengeance? For, should she carry her intended husband to Kirkclaugh, even with her father's approbation, she felt that she could not guarantee his life for a single hour, from the daggers of one or other of his rivals, who would revenge in this manner the disappointment they had suffered. One only path remained open for her to pursue, and she resolved on its adoption. This was to try the effect of a generous action on the Kerlies themselves. In making the intended sacrifice she felt perfectly aware of its magnitude, and that, under any other circumstances, it would amount to an unpardonable breach of duty; and what alarmed her most was the chance of its failure. But such was the feverish state of her passions, that a single glance at that side of the picture fell, like the burning Simoom, on her soul, whose baleful blast withered up the moisture of her brain, and lighted the torch of discord amidst her tortured feelings. She felt that, without Allan the world would be a desert, and life a thing only to be endured; and that no alternative could be so dreadful as its

prolongation, if deprived of the object of her desire.—Accustomed all her life to decide with promptitude, and to act with vigour, she resolved in the first instance to sail for Kirkclaugh, and afterwards to conduct Allan back to Cruggleton, and leave the other results to fate. Having thus settled her plans, she bore up the bay for her father's castle.

Nor did all this pass unnoticed at Cruggleton: for when the fleet was first discovered in sight, the sentinel gave the alarm, on the supposition that it was the combined forces of the Featherstones destined for the invasion of their territories; but when, on a nearer approach, they were seen shaping their course for Kirkclaugh, and that their own vessel was in the midst of them, they were filled with dismay, and entertained the most gloomy forebodings respecting the fate of Allan, who, if alive, must be the prisoner of the Gremes. Sir Ronald was inconsolable for the misfortune, accusing himself as the cause of it. The youth of the castle were assembled in the court-yard, and clamorously demanding to be led to the rescue, while those of riper years were seated in the hall, in close di-

van, and deliberating on the propriety of sending to ascertain his fate, and, if alive, to negotiate for his ransom.

When Eppie had seen her fleet safely moored, she went ashore, and repairing to her father, informed him of her adventure with the Featherstones, with the trifling deviation, that they had commenced a most unprovoked attack on her, and that she had brought them to answer for the aggression before him. Dugald, who immediately saw more advantage likely to arise out of the captivity and ransom of the knight, than ever could have resulted from his alliance, was delighted with the turn the affair had taken. He praised her prudence and foresight to the skies; nor was her valour forgotten, which had enabled her to achieve such a profitable adventure. He assured her that her share of the spoil should be in proportion to the gallantry she had displayed in obtaining it. She replied, that his approbation was in itself a sufficient reward without any other remuneration, and hinted the propriety of landing the prisoners, and inspecting the prizes, when he, on observing the vessel of the Kerlics at some dis-

tance from the harbour, at anchor, enquired the reason. She informed him that it belonged to a friend who had been of essential service to her during the engagement, and who, being under the necessity of pursuing his voyage, she felt it her duty to take leave of before she sailed.—Without waiting for a reply, she jumped on board a pinnace, having a crew of twelve rowers, when joining the Kerlies, and taking her vessel in tow, they stood over with every sail set for Cruggleton. The fact is, Dugald was by no means satisfied with the equivocal nature of Eppie's replies to his questions respecting the vessel at anchor, and had resolved in his own mind to be better informed on the subject before he permitted her to depart. For this purpose he descended to the beach, when a few questions to the first he met put him in possession of the whole fact, in so far as related to the capture of Sir Ronald's ship, with his only son on board, and of Eppie's intention of restoring it, with all it contained, to the Kerlies without ransom. Had an earthquake buried the castle in the ocean at his feet, it could not have excited more astonishment than this information.

That the daughter on whom he doated should become an apostate to his cause, and go over to his enemy, was a blow his slender stock of philosophy could not bear up against. As he was ignorant of the true cause of her defection, he could attribute her present conduct to no other than treachery; and yet the whole transaction was enveloped in a cloud of mystery too dense for his reasoning faculties to penetrate. For if revolt was her object, why did she not carry the English ships and prisoners to Cruggleton? But then, on the other hand, to permit such a golden opportunity of humbling the Kerlies to elude his grasp, when he might—in short, what might he not have done, had Allan remained his prisoner?—These reflections set open the flood-gates of his passions, and his rage knew no bounds. He loaded his daughter with curses and imprecations, vowing the most exemplary vengeance on her head, if she ever again fell into his power. He ordered two of the swiftest ships that he had, to pursue, and to bring them back either dead or alive, and not to spare even Eppie herself, should she resist his orders. All this she seemed to have foreseen, and provided a-

gainst; and it was with rage mingled with disappointment that he beheld them enter the harbour of Cruggleton, the distance being only six or eight miles.

The Kerlies, who witnessed the approach of the two vessels, and alike ignorant of the motives which led to it, were lost in surprise. They immediately recognised their own, accompanied by one belonging to the Græmes. They rushed to the beach, and beheld a scene, which nothing but the irresistible testimony of their own senses could have induced them to believe. They saw their young chief, weak and wounded, supported in the arms of Eppie Græme, and heard him, with gratitude beaming in his eye, proclaim the service she had rendered him, and how, when sinking under the unequal contest in which he was engaged, her aid alone had snatched him from captivity, if not from death; and whilst, with the compassion of a ministering angel, she had bound up his bodily wounds, and poured the balm of consolation over his mental sufferings, she had crowned the whole, by returning him, and his remaining followers, without reward, to the bosoms of their

friends. This acknowledgment it may well be imagined, secured her a most cordial welcome from Sir Ronald, whose gratitude knew no bounds. He declared himself ready to pay any ransom she might demand, and that, after all, he would remain her debtor. Eppie, with all that seeming generosity which she well knew how to assume, when she had a point to carry, deprecated every idea of remuneration. She declared that what she had done, was more the effect of chance than premeditation; and that, independent of any other feeling, every principle of humanity and true courage, would have induced her to take the weaker part against such an overwhelming odds; that although this interference would have been extended to any individual she found in equal peril, yet it was to her a source of self-gratulation that it had been rendered the means of snatching from a fate, that must otherwise have been inevitable, a youth of such gallant bearing and noble promise; and it gave her additional happiness to reflect, that the services she had rendered were not limited to Allan alone, as the captivity of Sir Hugh Featherstone, and the flower of his kin-

dred, who were prisoners in her father's castle—as also the loss of his best three ships, would not only prevent the meditated invasion, but cripple his resources for years to come. She begged that she might be permitted to indulge these feelings, unalloyed by the degrading retrospect, that she had bartered away a virtuous action for the wages of an hireling. She concluded by assuring Sir Ronald, that whatever little private quarrels might have arisen between her father and him, should never influence her conduct, so far as to render her a voluntary participator in a dishonourable action.

While the whole inhabitants of the castle were wild with joy, and nothing was heard but mutual congratulations, it was not the moment when Eppie's speech, or rather flourish, was likely to undergo a very rigid analysis—nor were even the wisest in that state of mind, that would have enabled them deliberately to weigh vapid professions against rooted principles. It was received, therefore, as it was meant it should be; and the seeming virtues of the daughter, made them for a moment forget the vices of the father. Eppie instantly became sensible of the impression she

had made, and resolved not to lose an inch of ground in the good graces of the Kerlies. She jumped into her pinnace, and waving her adieu, made a signal for her followers to join her. This, as she expected, was strenuously opposed by Sir Ronald, who insisted on her spending a few days at the castle, and participating in the rejoicings about to take place. Although this was the very point she wished to carry, yet she took a short time in seeming deliberation, before she gave her consent, which she at last did, for a week. She was then conveyed to the castle, and committed to the care of the lady of the mansion, and the strictest orders were issued to his dependents, that the rites of hospitality should be exercised towards the Græmes in the amplest manner.

In compliance with the commands of their chief, the Kerlies tried to welcome the Græmes within their walls. But whilst their lips uttered the words of peace, the flash of their eye spoke the spirit which was stirring within them; and whilst their right hands were extended in the grasp of apparent friendship, their left sought instinctively the hilts of their daggers.

At the request of her hostess, Eppie had taken off her armour, and assumed the habiliments of her sex, and when led into the hall by Sir Ronald, all present were struck with her altered appearance. She seemed, with her armour, to have laid aside all the masculine features of her character, and to have assumed the softer blandishments of the sex to which she belonged. Her deportment was modest, yet unembarrassed; and her address, though not refined, was insinuating. As in furtherance of her plans, it was necessary she should stand well with Sir Ronald, the whole artillery of her cunning was accordingly levelled against the weaker part of his moral citadel: This was,—pride of ancestry—the besetting sin of the age in which he lived. She never mentioned her father; but of her mother and her powerful relations she spoke freely; and willingly availed herself of every opportunity afforded her, of placing in the strongest light, their rank—their wealth, and splendid establishments. Nor was her affinity to the Gordons overlooked in these conversations, which generally led to recol-

lections of some acts of friendly intercourse between their respective families.

To these little details the knight listened with deepinterest. He seemed to have forgot that she was the daughter of Dugald Græme; whileshe, aware of the progress she was making in his good graces, improved the opportunities thus afforded her with such address, that his predilections in her favour amounted to a feeling almost paternal.

One of her principal points being thus gained, her next was to render these predilections subservient to her present purposes; yet still the nearer she seemed to approach the point on which all her wishes centered, some new and unforeseen obstacle would interpose itself, as in mockery of her hopes, and darken her horizon with the clouds of disappointment. Her father's character, and her own previous life, were combined with facts too well known, to admit either of apology or palliation. It was in vain that she tried to persuade herself that her present conduct would be received as a sufficient excuse for former delinquen-

cies.—No, the universal execration that followed her father's name, and her father's profession, arose like the spectres of the frightful *incubus*, to bar the path which led to her visionary paradise.

But this was a view of the subject, on which her vanity would not permit her long to dwell. To the attainment of one object she had sacrificed every other consideration; and to abandon the pursuit, because a few thorns were strewed in the path, would evidence a portion of mental imbecility altogether undeserving of success.—Her cogitations always concluded with this reflection, that by foul or fair means, Allan must be her's. If by the latter, she was resolved to abandon her father's house, and her father's profession, and to act so in future that the good which was to come should more than expiate the evils that were past, and that her whole life should afford only one bright example of domestic economy and conjugal fidelity: But if by the latter, then to carry Allan back to Kirkclaugh as her prisoner, and let the hand of fate wind up the unravelled skein of her destiny as it pleased.

Setting a guard over her every word and ac-

tion, she conducted herself with such a respectful modesty of demeanour, and seeming diffidence, as to do away in the bosom of Sir Ronald, every iota of former prejudices, and led him to the conclusion, that though reared in the hold of a robber, she possessed qualities which would do honour to the most exalted station of life. To Allan, her attentions were not more delicate than unremitting. She was the almost constant inhabitant of the sick-chamber; and soon discovered by the sparkle of his eye, and the pleasure that mantled over his features on her entrance, that her visits were not unwelcome.

While she was thus creating for herself an interest in the bosoms of both Sir Ronald and his son, and was insensibly paving the way to the ultimate completion of her wishes, a blow from an unexpected quarter levelled, in an instant, her air-built fabric with the dust. Sir Ronald's sister, a woman of cool penetration, could not, from the first arrival of Eppie in the castle, lay aside a suspicion that this shew of magnanimity, on the part of their guest, was only a cloak for some latent design, which, of whatever nature it might be, could bode her brother's house no good.

As she was determined not to alarm him, unless she discovered that her surmises were well founded, she in the mean time, was resolved to watch the motions of Eppie and her followers so closely, that if any occult mischief was in embryo, it should not escape her. She could not help noticing the very frequent visits to Allan's chamber ; and although he was now in a state of convalescence that enabled him to walk about, yet Eppie did not in the least relax in her attentions, which, the less they were required, seemed the more rigorously to be persevered in. In this instance, she was hurried away by her own temerity, to neglect the restraints she had imposed on herself; and keeping in view only the good footing on which she stood with Sir Ronald, and the pleasure that Allan visibly took in her society, she was led incautiously to conclude that she had carried her point with both.

The week she had promised was within a day of its termination, and she felt her heart bound for joy, when, on mentioning it, she observed the gloom that overspread the beautiful features of Allan. " Not so soon, madam, I hope," he faint-

ly stammered out.—"Cannot my father and I prevail for another week?" "Your father," she replied, "has not made the experiment; and for you, I dare not whisper, even to my own heart, to what length your influence over me might extend."

Allan, while he felt the conscious blood crimson his cheek, thanked her for her kind partiality, and added, that he would ever bear about with him a grateful remembrance of the important services she had rendered him, and that he should hereafter hold the life she had preserved at her disposal.—Eppie started to her feet, and grasping his hand with convulsive energy, was on the eve of making a full disclosure of the state of her heart, when a moment's reflection convinced her of the rashness of such a measure, as his declaration was couched in too general terms, to bear the partial construction she wished to attach to it; and in spite of her vanity, she was compelled to admit that it savoured more of gratitude than of a tenderer passion. Still, however, she fondly clung to the hope, that she was not indifferent to him—and that the time was not far distant when that partiality would be heightened into love. How much

soever, therefore, she wished to probe his feelings to the quick, she forbore pressing the subject any farther for the present, resolving, however, to renew it on some more favourable opportunity. She had laid aside all intention of returning to her father's house unaccompanied by Allan, and for that purpose had a plan arranged in her mind for protracting her departure, should the invitation not be repeated. She contented herself, therefore, with replying, that she held his life of too much value to be embarked in any more perilous adventure, than what might arise from an interchange of affections—and that how widely soever he might pervert her meaning, no gift of fortune could ever confer happiness on her, were the boon denied to him—that, situated as she had hitherto been, she had often been compelled to act a part repugnant to every better feeling of her nature; but that the veil had now been drawn aside, and she had been taught the value of principles she had in time past held in derision.

At that instant the door opened, and Sir Ronald entered, followed by his sister. Eppie immediately discovered that the lady had been playing

the eaves-dropper, by the gloom that darkened her features, and curled her lip; and she was also led to believe that she had imparted no moiety of her discoveries to Sir Ronald, as he advanced with a smiling air, and gave her a most cordial invitation to prolong her visit for another week. Eppie, who naturally concluded that her chance of success depended in a great measure on the favourable impression she had made on Sir Ronald, saw the necessity for bringing about an explanation, before his sister could have an opportunity of alarming his pride, by any *ex parte* information. She therefore replied, that before she accepted his hospitable invitation, she begged to be favoured with a private interview for a few minutes, as she had something of importance to submit for his consideration. He bowed, and politely led the way to his closet, and begging her to be seated, said he awaited her commands.

For a moment embarrassment was visible in her manner; but instantly rallying her spirits, she arose, and pacing the room with much dignity of manner, though with a hurried step, she at last broke silence, and said, "the subject to which I

wish to direct your attention is of too much consequence to us both, to have its importance frittered away by turgid gasconade, or idle circumlocution. I am no orator at best, and at this moment such is the state of mental agitation under which I am about to address you, that I feel I shall do little justice to the cause I am going to advocate.—You acknowledge I have done you a service, and I must play the egotist so far as to say, one of the first magnitude—and would to God it had been ten times greater, if it would thereby increase my influence with you in the same proportion. Such as it has been, however, I must recal it to your recollection; and pardon me, when I repeat the tale, that had it not been for me, you had this day been childless—nay probably houseless, your lands destroyed, and yourself a wanderer of the desert; for it is in vain to palliate the fact, that had the united forces of the Featherstones and their allies effected a landing, you had nothing to bring against them that could have arrested their march for a single hour. It is to my arm alone you are indebted for the safety of Alan,—the dispersion of your enemies,—and that

your castle is not a tottering ruin! And at what a sacrifice of filial duty this has been effected, it becomes not me to specify. It would be idle to enter into any investigation of the causes which rendered you my father's foe. It is sufficient for my purpose to state that such was the fact, while at the same time Sir Hugh Featherstone was his sworn ally. Now, permit me to enquire what would have been your fate, had the allies landed on your territories, when your son and the bravest of your kindred were prisoners in Kirkclaugh, and at my father's mercy? Sir Ronald, you were lost, had not my arm saved you.—You have offered me pecuniary rewards for the services I have rendered you—vainly imagining that I was to receive, as a full compensation for the sacrifices I have made, the heartless eleemosynary dole of a hireling. If I am to be rewarded, it must be to the full extent of the services I have rendered, and the sacrifices I have made, or not at all.—One way alone remains by which this can be done; and although from what I have said, you might spare my blushes, and guess the rest; yet, that no misconception may lead to erroneous conclusions on a subject of such vital

importance, it becomes my duty to be explicit:—I love your son—love him with a passion so strong, as to lay every other consideration, either moral or selfish, prostrate before it! Think not I wish to palliate what my true character has been, or to offer my present conduct as an apology for the aberrations of my past life—No, Sir, I scorn the flimsy subterfuge. I put to sea as your inveterate foe, determined on the destruction of you, and all that belonged to you, in so far as I should be able to effect it. A chain of unlooked-for circumstances placed the destinies of your house at my disposal; and what prevented me from offering to your lips the unmingled cup of misery your evil genius had prepared for you?—It was the beauty and gallantry of your son, which converted the hair by which the sword of retribution was suspended over your head, into a cable;—it was that which lighted the candle of conscience in my bosom, and exposed in frightful retrospect a review of my past life. Nursed in the den of an outlaw, amidst the clang of arms, and the din of warriors, was it not to be expected that I should adopt their principles, and embrace their profession? But since

the morning on which Allan became my captive, or rather on which I became his, I have reviewed, with horror, the career of guilt I have hitherto pursued with a thoughtless avidity. It rests with you alone to lead me back to the paths of rectitude and peace. With Allan for my husband, I should never wander more amidst the laybrinths of error, but should become as the plastic clay in his hands, and receive, and retain the impression of virtue from the seal of love.

"Nor am I one whose family will disgrace you in the eyes of the world. My mother was your equal in birth, and heiress to a fortune which, even to you, might appear considerable. That fortune by birth-right is mine; and were a legal claim to it vested in your son, it should not remain much longer a prey to its present lawless possessors.—It may be objected that he has made no discovery of his sentiments in my favour, and that this explanation should have come from him, instead of me: To this I reply, that though no direct communication has hitherto passed between us,—yet, had I not received the strongest proofs that our affection was mutual, this disclosure had never been made by me.

" You have now my whole heart laid open before you. Treat it, then, with that parental tenderness I have already experienced from you; and when you have impartially weighed the subject, you will be pleased to summon me to learn your final decision. I shall accept your offered hospitality for three days longer, on condition I am permitted to send a messenger to inform my father when he may expect me, and to apologise for my delay."

Sir Ronald replied, that as the subject was certainly of a most unexpected nature, some time was necessary both for serious enquiry and cool deliberation ;—that he would take an early opportunity of conversing with Allan ; and in the meantime, she had his full permission to make whatever communication to her father she thought proper, and after he had given the statement she had made him every consideration, she might rest assured, that whatever might be his final determination, he would endeavour to convince her that her confidence had not been misplaced.—He then, making his bow, returned with her to the hall.

CHAP. VIII.

"But hark, I'll tell ye o' a plot,
Though dinna ye be speaking o't." BURNS.

EFFIE could scarcely contain her indignation till she reached her apartment, when, flinging herself on a seat, she exclaimed, "So, here ends the first series of my plot, and now for the second, which must be managed by coercion alone. The permission I received at parting was fatal to my hopes, as he never would have rendered an application to my father necessary, had his mind not been previously made up to reject my proferred alliance; however, this is no time to sit down and brood over my disappointment—I must prepare to act, and that with vigour and circumspection, too, before his sister can underplot me."

Eppie desired, therefore, that Roderick Græme might attend her. This was one of her father's followers, to whom she had rendered a most signal service, having once saved him from the effects of her father's vengeance, for disobedience of orders; he having on a former occasion, when they burnt the castle of Muirfad, saved the lady from the flames, contrary to the express command of Dugald, and Roderick had, from that day forward, attached himself to Eppie in a most conspicuous manner, and had let no opportunity slip of evincing his gratitude. To him, therefore, she was resolved to unbosom herself without reserve, and to crave his counsel and assistance. Roderick heard her to an end in silence, and when she had finished, he inquired what measures she intended to pursue. "To fire the castle, and carry off Allan my prisoner," she replied; "but how both or either of these plans are to be effected, has been the cause of my seeking this conference."

"There are more conferences than our's going on just now," he replied; "as on passing Sir Ronald's study, I heard him and his sister in hot altercation, and as your name was often mentioned, I would

have listened, but I saw old Father Jasper bringing Allan to their council, so I was obliged to abscond, but how you are to conduct your enterprise with any prospect of success, is more than I can divine in the present instance.—Ever since we came here, the guards have been doubled, the garrison strengthened, and kept so much on the alert, that they could turn out at a minute's warning, either by night or by day; and although all this has been done under a show of friendship, and to enable them, as they set forth, to treat us with more respect, yet we are watched so close, that every Græme is attended by two Kerlies;—and then there is Father Jasper, as they call him, poking his huge canonical nose into every corner; and such is his seeming ubiquity that I verily believe there is not a spot of ground within the precincts of the castle, on which, if you describe a circle—thus—and pronounce a *conjuro te*—but pop, you have him in the middle of it,"—at that instant, the priest stood between them. Eppie starting back, uttered an exclamation, and clapped her hand to where her sword used to be suspend-

ed, whilst Roderick, with horror depicted in every feature, muttered between his teeth a pious ejaculation to his patron saint.

Father Jasper said (bowing at the same time,) "I come to inform you, Madam, that Sir Ronald waits your leisure in his study." So saying, he stalked off, shutting the door with a swing after him. "In the name of God, how came he in?" cried Roderick. "By the door which you incautiously left open," she replied.—"I must go—attend me here on my return,—and hold yourself in readiness to set out for Kirkclaugh to-morrow morning." "I shall be fully prepared for my journey," he answered; "but one thing permit me to caution you against on the present occasion, be all resignation and seeming acquiescence: I will be more explicit on my return;" so saying they parted.

Had the last trumpet sounded its dreadful reveillie in Sir Ronald's ears, it could not have taken him worse prepared than he was for the avowal made him by Eppie. She had no sooner left him, than he sent for his sister, and laid before her the sum of their conference. She listened without ma-

nifesting any token of surprise; and, in her turn, narrated the colloquy which passed between Allan and Eppie, to which she had become an unwilling auditor. "But this is a case," she continued, "that requires no deliberation. Her services have been important; let her reward be princely; let her return from whence she came, laden with gifts till even avarice itself cry, Hold—but all beyond that is madness."—"She certainly," replied Sir Reginald, "saved Allan's life; and alas, I feel, that had he fallen, I had not long survived him—besides, should he really be attached to her"—"Allan's attachment," interrupted she, "can be nothing but the childish ebullitions of overweening gratitude; and he may, from his ignorance of the world, have been led to consider her the most amiable of her sex, merely because she did not possess that native delicacy of character, which would have induced the truly feminine mind to shrink from the advances she has made him—and much more, from the proposals she hath, with such unblushing effrontery, submitted for your consideration.—Allan, I promise you, will be ruled by you, without feeling any mighty sacrifice on his part; but even should it

be otherwise, and that his death either might have been, or must be the consequence of your declining the proposed alliance ; and though I do not yield even to you in affection for my amiable nephew, yet would I, with unshrinking nerves, embrace the dreadful alternative, and follow the remains of the last of my race to the tomb of his sainted mother, and with my own hand blot our very name from the annals of the nation, rather than he should ever call the robber Græme father.

"But Father Jasper will bring Allan here, and we will soon learn the progress this affair has made from himself."

On his appearance, his father desired him to be seated, and said, "I sent for you, Allan, for the purpose of asking a few questions, and beg you will answer me ingenuously." "My dearest father," he replied, hurt by the inference, "did I ever answer otherwise?" "Well, then, did you ever solicit the hand of Eppie Græme in marriage ?"— "Never." "Did you ever, either directly or indirectly, give her to understand that you felt a sentiment in her favour, which might induce you to

prefer her to the rest of her sex?" "I have often expressed my gratitude to her in the warmest manner, and wished for an opportunity of evincing it by more weighty arguments than words; but beyond that, no feeling or declaration ever went, that could lead to the conclusion in the question." "One word more, and I have done. If left the uncontrolled master of your own actions, would you make Eppie Græme your wife?" "Dear father, why that question? Has there been any thing in my previous conduct, that could for a moment lead to the conclusion, that I have been uncandid in my replies? I am fully sensible of the debt I owe her, and of the magnitude of the services she has rendered, not to me only, but to us all; and so high is the swell in my bosom at this moment, that I could fight for her, and even die in her defence; and whatever the provocation may be, I will never lift my hand against her life. Nay, farther, as she seems to anticipate her father's vengeance for her truly noble conduct towards me, rather than a hair of her head should be injured, I would accompany her to Kirkclaugh, and deliver myself up a prisoner, to remain at the mercy

of the ruffian till ransomed: But to marry her!—no,—I would rather leave my unburied bones in the deepest dungeon of her father's castle, than accept of life and liberty on such terms."

"I am quite satisfied," replied Sir Ronald. "You may now retire, my dear son, with the assurance that I would not compromise the honour of my house, nor your peace of mind, for all the wealth the world has to bestow. You may retire also, sister; and Father Jasper, as he goes, will inform Eppie Græme that I await her leisure."

She found Sir Ronald pacing his closet, and could not help noticing the air of haughty reserve that deepened the wrinkles on his forehead, and heightened the tinge on his cheek. He desired her to be seated, but she continued standing. He then proceeded, in the most delicate manner, to inform her, that after giving her proposal every consideration, he felt himself under the necessity of declining the honour she intended him; and had to beg on his part, that she would condescend to receive a remuneration more adequate to the importance of the service she had rendered, and that he could with more propriety bestow, and she with more

advantage receive, than the one petitioned for; that, keeping his son's youth and the influence of her early habits, in a moral point of view, entirely out of the question, he should only consider their probable effects in the event of an union with him.

"You have, from your infancy," he said, "been accustomed not to obey, but to command men, and those too, of the most turbulent character—and who could only be kept under control by frequent example, and rigorous chastisement. Could it for a moment be supposed, Madam, that you could all at once lay aside principles on which you have uniformly acted, and assume in their stead, domestic virtues, of whose very existence you are at this moment ignorant—and that, instead of braving danger in the battle's front, and leading your troops on to victory and plunder, you should all at once assume the milder features of your sex's character, and become the enduring, passive, obedient helpmate of man. This would be a metamorphosis too important to be effected by the feverish glow of a transient passion.—But to sum up the whole, I have examined Allan, and find his

sentiments to be perfectly in unison with my own. His gratitude is unbounded, and there is no sacrifice, short of becoming your husband, he is not ready to make in your service. Weigh the circumstances I have laid before you dispassionately in your own mind, and it will instruct you how slender your chance of happiness would be, were your wishes acceded to. I shall endeavour to obviate your father's wrath, which he might indulge at your expence on the present occasion, by sending in lieu of the ship you have returned, two of equal burden; and as he has a number of prisoners, who may have exhausted his store of provisions, they shall be laden with such things as you think will be most acceptable;—and for the ransom of Allan and his crew, I will pay you five thousand merks of gold; and if you can suggest any thing else that might be agreeable to him, it shall freely be added.

"One thing may be mentioned, which, should the question at issue terminate in an amicable arrangement, may eventually be of the greatest advantage to your father, both in a moral and political point of view.—You cannot be ignorant of

the fact, that for causes not necessary to mention, he is a proscribed outlaw, with a price set on his head, and that nothing but the distracted state of the kingdom, prevents a force being sent against him, sufficient to reduce his castle, when the only alternative left him would be submission or flight. Were the latter practicable, and if taken, you are well aware he would have no mercy shewn him. Now, should he be disposed to give security for his good conduct in future, I shall use my interest to free him from the attainder, and thereby restore him to his rank in society, and the favour of his sovereign.—You will communicate this to your father, and on receiving a favourable message from him, I shall instantly make the necessary application, where I have every hope of success."

During this address, Eppie seemed to be struggling under the influence of some passion which required her utmost efforts to subdue. The rapid strides with which she measured the apartment; her involuntary starts; the deep tinge that dyed her cheek, and the flashes that shot from her dark eye, all bore sufficient evidence of the tumultuous state of her feelings. At last, drawing her-

self up to her full length, she stood erect in front of the knight, and, in a subdued voice, replied,—

"It gives me great pain, Sir Ronald, to discover that you cannot divest yourself of certain prejudices, which induce a belief that it would be inconsistent with my character to do a good action, without some either direct or latent motive of self-interest at its bottom. It must ever operate as a severe tax on the returning penitent, that the malice of the world will not give him credit for the sincerity of his intentions of abandoning the paths of vice, and returning to the sanctuary of virtue, without the sinister stimulus of some occult principle, altogether at variance with the character he wishes to assume. This most unchristian feeling has been the ruin of thousands, and, so long as persisted in, will ruin thousands more: For, who would ever attempt the irksome task of self-reformation, with such a host of uncharitable suspicions lurking around them, giving a false colouring to every action, and like the viper, extracting poison out of the fairest flower?

"Pardon my warmth, which has been called forth on the present occasion by your illiberal in-

sinuation, that I am incapable of doing a virtuous action for its own sake, without keeping in view some abstract prospect of personal advantage. I again repeat, for the last time, that I will not receive any remuneration on account of the services I have rendered you; nor will I forego the proud reflection, that the daughter of Dugald Græme, the outlaw—or robber, if you will, has an uncancelled debt of gratitude standing over against the house of Cruggleton, for that safety and protection they could not have at the time afforded themselves. And although I am not aware of any attainder that has drawn a *bar sinister* over my father's shield, yet if any such exist that you can remove, he must thank you in person. With regard to the subject which led to this discussion, I have yet to apologise. Misled by appearances, I too incautiously embraced the error, that what I am now satisfied arose only from the fervid emanations of a grateful heart, had arisen from feelings of a softer nature. And I too rashly acted on this supposition, without duly weighing the consequences of a premature discovery of my sentiments. I have only now, in

my turn, to beg that you will pardon, and forget that ever such a declaration was made.

" I shall trespass on your hospitality for the time mentioned, and shall avail myself of your permission to send over a messenger, to announce when I will return to my father's house, and to procure me an escort home. Permit me now to retire, and when we meet again, I trust the negociations of this day will, by all parties, be buried in oblivion, and never thought of more."

While this interview was passing in Sir Ronald's study, one equally important was in full progress between his sister and Father Jasper. He had heard enough of the colloquy between Eppie and Roderick, to convince him that some plot was hatching, but of what nature he had yet to learn. One part of it did not escape him, however, which was the appointment for a second conference, and he insisted on the necessity of, by some means or other, becoming acquainted with the subject under discussion, and its result. To this suggestion the lady most religiously echoed *Amen*; but how that was to be effected was the question. At last she recollected that there was in Eppie's chamber

a recess with folding doors, which had at one time been used as a wardrobe, but was now empty. In this she proposed the priest should be locked up, with a promise of liberating him, as soon as the family should be assembled in the hall for supper. Against this arrangement, the Father loudly objected, stating the risk he should run, if detected by two such desperate characters—that he was often troubled with a teasing cough, which he could not suppress; and when these objections were overruled, he hoped, on inspection, the place would be found not sufficiently capacious for his bulk. No alternative now remained for him, but make the experiment, and he followed his lady to the fatal chamber, invoking the protection of every saint in the missal, and praying most fervently that the aperture might be too small for him. Nay, such was his terror, that he would have compounded for the loss of a leg or an arm, could he thereby have guaranteed his safety from the daggers of the dreaded conspirators; and when he heard the key grate in the rusty lock, and saw the tomb in which he was to be inhumed, "ope its ponderous jaws" to receive him, his terrors overcame him afresh,

and he resolutely refused to enter. The lady commanded him on his allegiance to proceed, that he might be locked up before the interview was at an end; and when his knees fairly refused their office, she took him by the shoulder, and pushed him in. He found the place not so limited in its dimensions as he at first imagined. It contained a low shelf, on which he could sit down. He was then cautioned not to lose a single word of the conversation, and having again received a promise of liberation as soon as the bell rang, he was locked up, and left to his meditations.

Eppie no sooner returned to her chamber, than she sent for Roderick, and laid before him the conversation she had with Sir Ronald, without reserve, and craved his advice as to the best means of carrying Allan off her prisoner. He replied, that as the measure she proposed was fraught with danger, wherein one false step might be fatal to them all, it required to be embarked in with the utmost prudence; that, ever since she first honoured him with her confidence on the subject, he had given it much of his serious consideration; and he believed, if she possessed suf-

ficient resolution to carry it into effect, he had hit on an expedient which could not fail of putting not only Allan, but the castle and all it contained, entirely into her power:—"Have you ever heard the story of 'the Boatman and the Standard of Denmark?'" On her replying in the negative, he continued,—"Then I must tell it you;—it is a wild legend, and was recited to me by a sentinel, as I kept the turret watch with him one evening; but he assured me it had obtained universal belief in the castle. That fact alone renders it necessary for you to be acquainted with it; and besides, I am of opinion, that something may be struck out of it which may materially forward your views." She nodded assent, and, desiring him to be seated, as she was all attention, he began as follows—

CHAP. IX.

Roderick's Tale.

"Now the storm begins to lower,
Haste, the loom of hell prepare—
Iron sleet of arrowy shower,
Hurtles in the darkened air." GRAY.

"SOME centuries ago, Haco, King of Denmark, (or of Norway, as some authors say,) meditating a descent on Dublin, sailed from Orkney with a mighty fleet, which, on entering the narrow seas that separate the north of Ireland from Galloway, were assailed by a terrible storm, and so completely scattered, that the king, with two ships only, sought refuge from its fury in Wigtown bay. Haco, having cast anchor opposite to Cruggleton, he despatched a messenger to the castle to communicate to the knight to whom it belonged, the rank of his visitor, with the cause of his coming, and

to obtain shelter for his ships till repaired, a supply of provisions and other necessaries, and lastly, that proper accommodations might be provided for his majesty in the castle during his stay. The chief of the Kerlies of that day was at a loss how to act, in this critical juncture, as on the one hand, he wished by all means to avoid giving offence to such a relentless and vindictive tyrant as Haco, who at some future time, might take ample vengeance for any real or pretended insult he might receive; so on the other, he was fully determined not to admit within his walls such treacherous guests. He therefore sent back the messengers laden with such refreshments as he could furnish on the spur of the occasion, with pilots to conduct them to a bay about two miles to the northward of the castle, where they would find every convenience they could wish for, adding, that supplies of all kinds of necessaries should be sent them, and if found requisite, a number of mechanics should assist in forwarding their repairs;—he apologised for not waiting on the king in person, and as the castle was undergoing some extensive, though necessary repairs, he was sorry

ry he could not have the honour of receiving him as his guest. With this answer Haco seemed satisfied. He sailed for the place pointed out by the chief, where, having landed his troops and stores, and pitched his camp, he instantly commenced an enquiry into the extent of the injury he had received, and took measures for having them set to rights without loss of time. This affected show of cordiality on his part, however, was all assumed. The prudence and foresight of Kerlie had for the time defeated the object on which he had set his heart. He had viewed the castle from the sea, and entertaining the most exalted idea of its strength and localities, had formed the resolution, that on gaining admission, of which he never doubted, he would seize, and hold it as a key to the southern counties of Scotland—an object, in which had he succeeded, that would have been a fatal blow to the welfare and prosperity of the kingdom. Baffled in one instance, however, he did not abandon his design; but still kept up a friendly intercourse with the castle; and the farther to lull their suspicions to rest, he issued the strictest orders, that none of

his troops should wander beyond the precincts of the camp, nor be found strolling near the castle, on pain of his high displeasure; and that all his correspondence should be maintained by an aged domestic, who invariably went and came by sea, and who was known by the designation of the Old Boatman.

"Under all this seeming shew of friendship, however, the Kerlies by no means felt themselves at ease—their suspicions had been completely awakened, and every trifle afterwards became to them matter of alarm. They were impatient at the tardy progress the repairs were making, and could not avoid occasional comments on the increasing frequency of the boatman's visits. These were made on the most frivolous pretences—and they had even detected him, when he thought himself unobserved, examining the fortifications with a keenness of scrutiny, which by no means served to allay their apprehensions,—particularly, when, in forwarding some repairs, the workmen, having found the drawbridge too weak to permit the conveyance of some very weighty materials over it from the country, had been under the necessity of strengthening it by a tem-

porary erection, which, for the time, prevented its being raised. To the bridge, therefore, they often found the attention of the Old Boatman particularly directed ; and as often as he found he had attracted the notice of any other person, he withdrew in seeming confusion.—From all these circumstances, they were convinced that some plot was contemplated inimical to their safety, but of what nature they were unable to discover.

" It fortunately happened, however, that the Kerlie had in his service, a man who had been a prisoner to the Danes for some years, and who spoke their language. Him he singled out, and having arrayed him like a Danish soldier, sent him into the camp to play the eaves-dropper—and to bring what discoveries he could make to his master. This person contrived to elude the vigilance of the sentinels—and in the dusk of the evening made his way in, and by concealing himself in the royal tent, where he was informed a council of the chiefs were about to assemble, by order of the king, he heard the whole plan of attack finally arranged, and the succeeding night fixed on for carrying it into effect. As soon as

the council broke up, he made his escape in the same manner by which he had entered, and laid the particulars before his chief, which amounted to this, that the Danes had, in their expedition, carried with them their famous enchanted or sacred STANDARD, the gift, as they pretended, of the three Destinies, or Scandinavian fates, to one of their former sovereigns, sent by the hand of a mighty sorceress, who informed him that its texture was woven out of the mane of a lion—and that to preserve its virtue unimpaired, it was necessary that the raven on its field, should be fed at midnight with human blood.* Many surprising virtues were attributed to this mysterious Standard, one of the most important of which was, 'that when unfurled, the spear on which it was elevated, shaken to the four winds of heaven, and the aid of the three sisters invoked by name, every time it was so shaken, they would then appear to the standard-bearer, seated amidst the boiling eddies of a thunder cloud, armed each with a bow, and arrows pointed with lightning, and sailing on the

* Godboldt. Myth. Gothæ et Vand. Tom. IV. P. 480. Utrecht Ed. 1691.

wings of the tempest, scattering ruin and desolation amidst the ranks of the enemies of Denmark, and at the same time rendering both the standard and its bearer invulnerable.'

"This mysterious Ensign was to be committed to the charge of the Old Boatman—who was to approach the castle after it was dark, and to gain admission by a pretended message from the king. He was then to unfurl his standard, and rush to the gate opposite the draw-bridge, and there await the arrival of the Danes, who were to be posted in ambush in the immediate vicinity of the castle, and to whom the storm was to have been the signal that the spell had taken effect. They were then to march over the bridge and assault the gate, which they imagined the accumulating horrors of the supernatural phenomena, would render an easy purchase; and when once in, every individual was to be put to the sword. The Kerlies lost not a moment in providing for their safety;—the repairs were suspended, the temporary erections removed, and the bridge raised, the vassals quietly called in, and all in silence awaited the issue.

"At last the eventful evening arrived. Sometime

after it was dark, the Old Boatman was seen approaching the harbour. Being hailed by the sentinels, he replied that he brought a message from the king to their chief, as he intended to sail in the morning, the repairs being completed. He was admitted, and the instant he landed was seized by a guard, who took the Standard from him, and having bound him, carried him into the court of the castle, where the whole garrison was drawn up under arms. In the centre a gallows was erected, and he was ordered up for immediate execution.

"The veteran turned with a look of contempt to the chief, and said, 'Think not because I have failed in carrying my sovereign's orders into effect, that you are thereby rendered secure. The fatal Standard is within your walls, and your castle, in consequence thereof, becomes a fief of the crown of Denmark. Such are our laws, and as such I claim it in behalf of my royal master. See that dark portentous cloud that rises in solemn majesty from the west, and whose fiery outline glows like a furnace from the reflection of the rising moon: there sits enthroned the Sisters of Den-

mark—I see the quiver of Friga, the treble shield of Saugrida, and the spear of Hilda. They come to assert my claims, and to bear me in triumph to their airy halls! I come—I come—descend in your chariot of clouds, and receive my departing spirit!' At that moment a peal of low muttering thunder died away to the north, when, casting his eye westward with a flash of wild rapture, he cried, 'My prayer is heard; and this night, dead or alive, will I unfurl the fatal Standard on your walls;—and not this night only, but on every succeeding anniversary, till the end of time, shall its dusky volumes wave over your battlements, in token of your subjection to the crown of Denmark.—I now go to quaff from the sculls of mine enemies the blood of the celestial vintage—to scour the fields of æther on the steads of Odin—to paint the meteors of the pole—to point the lightning, and to barb the hail.' So saying, he contrived to free one of his hands, and drawing a concealed dagger, plunged it in his bosom, and expired in a moment.

"The Danes waited long for the magical signal, but nothing beyond the ordinary course of events

inviting them forward, they sent a small piquet, who cautiously approached the drawbridge, which they found raised ; and from this and some other precautions which had been adopted, they became assured that their plot had been discovered. They therefore withdrew to their camp with all possible secrecy, using every precaution to guard against surprise, where, striking their tents, and getting every thing on board, they sailed by daylight, and were never more heard of.—Their sacred Standard was thus left in possession of the Kerlies, who, being equally superstitious with the Danes themselves, respecting the virtues of the enchanted ensign, held a council of war on what should be done with it. Many conflicting opinions were given on the subject ; but the majority, alarmed at the threatened visit of the boatman, and of their mysterious subjugation to the crown of Denmark, voted that it should be committed to the flames. And to carry this resolution into effect, a huge pile was erected in the court-yard, and the unfortunate raven was on the eve of having his plumage singed, when, just as they had tied it to a stake in the middle, and were apply-

ing the torch to kindle the fire, a peal of thunder shook the castle to its foundation, and a female figure of gigantic stature snatched it from the pile, and soaring aloft, was lost in the bosom of the cloud.

"The boatman, it is believed, has kept his promise, or rather threat, and not only on the night of his death, but on the same night of every succeeding year, the small boat, with its rower, is seen to approach the harbour at midnight; the spectre lands and the guards fly before it, leaving every gate open in their retreat: It marches forward to the turret, fronting the drawbridge where the standard is displayed, till the cock crows, when a fiery chariot descends, into which he mounts, and after encircling the castle three times, waving the flag, soars aloft, and disappears in a stream of brilliant light. Now, two nights only have to elapse, till the period of his annual visit returns, being the evening of the day on which you purpose leaving the castle.—I shall go over to Kirkclaugh, and offer such reasons for your conduct as I know must satisfy your father, and if he will be guided by me, I shall engage

to place the castle and its proud chief at his mercy. My plan is, that you depart at the time appointed, and return at night in the habiliments of the Spectre Boatman, not forgetting your Standard; that the whole of your father's forces embark, and follow you at a short distance in profound silence. When you gain the harbour, you shall display a small torch on the point of your spear; this shall be the signal that the sentinels are fled. Your friends must then pull in with muffled oars, and follow you at a short distance up the dangerous acclivity, and the court-yard once gained, all is our own,—as the garrison, taken so completely by surprise, will be incapable of making any serious resistance. It will then be easy to force the gates by fire,—or even to threaten the castle itself with the same element, should they refuse to surrender at discretion.

"But this is anticipating the worst and most improbable event that could happen, as the Kerlics, on the first alarm, will rush out, and your father will have ample provision made for their reception. And when the combat, or rather slaughter is raging around, how easy will it be for you to single

out Allan—and even the knight, if you wish it, and carry them on board your vessel as prisoners, and I have a presentiment that the rest must be at your father's disposal.

"There is only one thing in the above arrangement, to which you can offer any serious objection—that is, the personification of the spectre Dane, and the hazard you run of coming in contact with the real boatman; but this you may avoid, by anticipating his time of appearing for an hour—nor could he, if a true Dane, possibly take offence at your assuming his semblance, to assure you success in an expedition wherein he failed,—or probably the whole is a fiction; but as it has gained a firm belief in the castle, it makes alike for your purpose as if it were true.—I have now told you my story, and the plot on which you are to rear your superstructure, and wait your answer."

"You have been inspired by the spirit of the Dane," Eppie cried, jumping up in a transport, and grasping his hand,—"your plot is divine, and shall be acted on to the letter,—and if my father engages for his part, it cannot fail; go, and pre-

pare for your journey in the morning,—as the pinnace must return for me on the ensuing day,—and then, Cruggleton, stand fast, for I will shake thy walls, from the battlements to the foundation, and teach thy haughty master that I am not to be insulted with impunity. Let us now separate for the night; nor must I be suspected of holding any secret correspondence with you, more than the rest of my followers. I shall therefore, before your departure, give you what instructions I may think proper in public—and be sure you are one of the party that returns for me, as I shall be most anxious to learn your reception from my father, and if he will fall in with our plan.—I hear the bell, so good night." She then adjusted her dress and hastened to the hall.

CHAP. X.

" *Albany.*—See thyself, devil !—
Proper deformity seems not in the fiend
So horrid as in woman." LEAR.

THE knight's sister waited with impatience the breaking up of the conference ; and as soon as she had lodged Eppie fairly in the hall, she hastened to liberate the priest. She found him more dead than alive :—his face livid ; his joints trembling ; and large drops of perspiration exuding from every pore. " Well, what discoveries have you made ? Tell me all at once." " Discoveries !" he replied ; " O bring me to the open air, and give me a little water, for the sake of the blessed virgin—or even should it be only wine. —O, Saint Ninian help us, or we shall soon all be sailing on thunder clouds, amidst gigantic wo-

men, black standards, and old boatmen ; while enchanted ravens and savage Danes, drink our blood out of their own sculls ! O, 'tis an infernal plot, and if we do not escape, the castle will be whirled three times round the battlements in a chariot of fire, and carried off in a clap of thunder !" " Why, Father Jasper, recollect yourself. Your wits have gone a wool-gathering. These are the ravings of a distempered brain. Take time, and arrange your scattered ideas, and favour me with something like a consistent narrative, that if any danger be near us, we may be prepared either to meet, or avoid it." " O, lady, danger indeed is near us ;—it is above our heads ;—it is below our feet ;—it comes armed with barbed lightning and pointed hail ;—it comes amidst red cauldrons of pitchy darkness, and the moon in the middle of it." " This is downright frenzy ;—retire to your chamber, and I will apologise for your absence from supper ;—and try, by the time I return, to rally your scattered senses, and have your discoveries reduced to a tangible shape." " O, lady, forgive me, for horror has frozen the current in my veins, and sent the

sanguine stream back like icicles to my heart. I know not what I have said, but return as soon as you can, and bring Sir Ronald with you, as what I have to tell involves the safety of us all.'

As soon as the company retired, the trio met in the lady's apartment, and Father Jasper having got the better of his fears, gave a circumstantial detail of what the reader has already been informed. The lady then stated her previous suspicions of the good faith of the Græmes, and that the seeming magnanimity of Eppie was only a cloak to disguise some latent treachery;—that certain inadvertencies on the part of their guest, had first awakened her suspicions of some deep design against Allan. These she purposely delayed making him acquainted with, till she should be in possession of some tangible fact, on which she could rest her accusation, which, by the good management of Father Jasper, she now fortunately was.

Sir Ronald, after thanking them for their zeal and alacrity, added, that the plot itself gave him little uneasiness, as it required only to be known to be defeated. But how to proceed in

a manner that would be least injurious to their guest, was the point that puzzled him. The lady and priest vehemently protested against any middle course. They represented, that an opportunity had offered itself for extirpating this nest of robbers and pirates; and should he, from any mistaken principle of lenity, neglect to avail himself of it, he would be answerable to his God and his country, for every act of violence and murder they might thereafter commit;—that none were so likely to suffer from his ill-timed mercy as himself, his family and friends;—that although the present plot had been discovered by their foresight and diligence, yet a spirit of enterprise was manifested through the whole of it, that at some future period might lead to a more successful termination in another shape, and end in the total ruin of his house. They suggested the propriety of laying the whole before a council of his friends, and being in some measure guided by their opinions. This having been done, the result was, that the Graemes should be allowed to fall by the snare they had laid for the destruction

of others ; and all that Sir Ronald could obtain was a pledge of safety for Eppie.

The reader is referred to the introduction for the localities of Cruggleton, and only requires to be reminded, that a winding path led upwards from the harbour to the castle, and that it was intersected by a wall, having a gate and portcullis at the high water-mark, and the same defences at the entry into the court-yard.

The plan of operations for the approaching contest having been finally arranged, they, as a farther measure of precaution, ordered two of their best vessels to be manned with picked crews, and to be silently withdrawn in the dusk of the evening, and placed in an ambush, in a small cove, for the purpose of cutting off the retreat of the fleet.

Nothing particular occurred during the remaining period of Eppie's visit. The day of her departure at length arrived ; a few words from Roderick informed her, that her father was fully satisfied with the explanation given him ; that he entered warmly into her plans ; and that every thing would be found in readiness on her arrival, for giving full effect to them. She was overjoyed

at the information, and hastened her departure. On taking leave of Sir Ronald, she was again pressed to accept a reward of some kind—which she still firmly rejected. To his sister, she conducted herself with a stately reserve—to Allan with kindness, without being particular, and on waving her valedictory adieus to all, a shade of dark and portentous meaning overspread her countenance, which each knew well how to interpret.

Her return was hailed with boisterous revelry at Kirkclaugh. Her father either did give, or seemed to give full credit to her assertions, that the whole of her conduct from first to last, was the result of a deep laid plan of lulling the Kerlies into a fatal security, that she might afterwards deliver them all into his hands. She only conditioned for the safety of Allan—whom having once delivered, she could not think of devoting to destruction. Dugald, over whose mental optics a kind of moonlight intelligence seemed to beam—imagined he had now discovered the true mainspring which gave impulse to a line of conduct so inexplicable as her's had hitherto been; but as to

notice must have been to censure it, he was silent for the time, and promised every thing she required, fully resolved, however, that once in possession of the castle, he would wind up the tragedy in his own way.

Nor were the Kerlies idle at this most important crisis. The whole of their powerful clan were called up, and received orders to enter the castle in the dusk of the evening—in small parties, and in the most profound silence. The battlements were loaded with missiles of every description, the furnace was lighted, and the pitch kettles filled—the arbalasts were fixed, and the bolts piled in heaps—and the whole of their defensive measures in the most forward state of preparation.

At last the eventful evening came, accompanied with a dense haze and drizzling rain: this was hailed as a fortunate omen by both parties, as it allowed each to make their preparations unobserved by the other. About an hour before midnight, the sentinels, who were on the alert, observed a small boat approach the harbour, and at a distance they heard the plash of oars, although the fog prevented their observing how near they were. The skiff

glided in in silence, and a figure in complete armour, having the fatal Standard in its hand, landed, and approached the gate; the drawbridge was lowered, and the sound of retreating footsteps was heard in full flight towards the castle. "All goes right," said the figure, softly; "light the torch." Immediately a dozen of men started up from the bottom, where they had lain concealed, and a small fitful stream of pale light shot its feeble rays through the dense atmosphere. "Let six remain to secure the gate," says Eppie, "till my father arrives, and the rest follow me for the same purpose above—but he is here already, and I must proceed with my supernatural prologue." So saying, she advanced rapidly up the path, waving her flag as she went. Dugald at that instant shot silently into the harbour, and commenced his debarkation. His confederates, left at the gate, gave him the preconcerted signal that all was well. He now issued his final orders,—"to spare no living soul belonging to the Kerlies—to seize no prisoners." And taking one or two of his confidential assassins aside, he hinted, in pretty plain terms, that if a random blow was dealt to Eppie in the

strife, it would be a favour conferred on him—as, her having once betrayed him, put an end to all future confidence, and he was fully aware that the orders now issued by him, would for ever extinguish any remaining sparks of filial affection that might still linger in her bosom. He then gave orders to advance with rapidity and silence.

In the mean time, Eppie approached the upper gate, and met the same reception as below; the bridge was lowered, and the sentinel fled. Scarcely had she posted her remaining party, when she saw the head of her father's column emerging from the defile. She proceeded with a slow measured step as they deployed into line in the court-yard, till she reached the land-gate, when, rapidly ascending the turret, for the purpose of fixing her standard, her ears were astounded with the clanking of chains, the thundering fall of the portcullis, the blast of a trumpet, and the cry of treachery! She threw down her standard, and drawing her sword, was rushing to join her father, when her flight was intercepted by Sir Ronald, at the head of a party of his domestics, all completely armed. "Yield," he cried, "and save your

life. Your whole plot has been discovered, and I am here to save you from the carnage that must ensue.—Follow me into the castle, and rely on my promise of being still treated with honour and respect." To this friendly greeting she replied by a blow which felled him to the ground; and was in her turn stretched beside him, by the battle-axe of one of his retainers, and both of them carried into the castle by a postern, which was secured behind them.

The defensive plan of the Kerlies had by this time fully developed itself, and the unfortunate Græmes became sensible, when too late, of the ruin that had overtaken them: For instead of one sentinel, two had been posted at each gate—one fled to decoy them forward, and one remained to execute his chief's orders; for as soon as they had all passed the harbour-gate, the remaining sentinel dropt the portcullis, and, unhooking a link of the chain, threw one end down, and rolled the other about the winch;—he then raised the drawbridge, and fled along the top of the wall, concealing himself in a cleft of the precipice. The same took place above, with this difference,

that instead of permitting the whole of the Græmes to enter the court-yard, the portcullis fell as soon as the half passed in.

By this time, the combat, if combat it might be called, raged in the court-yard with dreadful fury. The Græmes, fairly caught in the toil, and urged on by despair, made a desperate effort to force the gates of the castle; but it was barricaded in a manner that defied their utmost strength. In the mean time, the burning pitch and sulphur descended on their heads in flaming torrents; while darts, spears, arrows, stones, billets of wood, and bars of iron, flew amongst them like hail.—It was one of those scenes on which the eye of a warrior could have dwelt for ever. The castle itself rose in sullen majesty, towering amidst the dim vapour, with which its outline was blended; while its battlements, like the crater of a volcano, sent a fiery deluge into the court-yard beneath. The twang of the arbalasts—the hiss of the bolts—the thundering reverberations of the more ponderous missiles—the shouts of the combatants—the groans of the wounded, mingled with the harsh monotonous swell of the ocean, that rolled at a

frightful depth beneath their feet, formed altogether such an assemblage of the terrific sublime, that, like the wire of a poetical conductor, would have elicited sparks of fire from the pen of Danté.

Nor were the attentions of the Kerlies exclusively confined to those in the court-yard; for the remainder of the Græmes, cooped up between the two gates, alike attracted their notice, as the dangerous path-way through its whole range, was seen and commanded from the parapet of the wall, surrounding the court next the sea, so the same engines of destruction were showered on their defenceless heads. Many ineffectual attempts were made to force the harbour gate, raise the portcullis and retire to their ships. But the precautions already taken, rendered that effort unavailing, as they were destitute of the means of uniting the severed chain. At last, their cries brought their companions left in the fleet to their aid, who succeeded in throwing a knotted rope over the wall, by which about a hundred of them escaped to their ships.

The Kerlies, tired of this distant species of warfare, threw open every door in the castle,

and rushed out sword in hand; but alas! here no trumpet sounded the note of stern defiance,—no close-wedged ranks stood with uplifted weapons, awaiting the coming onset—no murmur was heard in the court, except the expiring groans of wretches in the last throes of mortal agony, or the feeble, half-suppressed voice, that humbly sued for mercy. The portcullis was then raised, and they rushed down the path, which they found strewed with the mangled remains of the unfortunate invaders.—The sentinel returned, and told the escape of the Grœmes over the wall, and the flight of their ships. Slow and warily they returned, and having posted a strong guard at each gate, and disposed of their prisoners in the dungeons of the castle, they repaired to the hall, and in mournful silence awaited the coming day.

At length the wished-for dawn appeared, the grey mist began to roll itself up like a curtain—distant objects became more and more distinct, till at last the whole landscape of the eastern side of the bay, becam' developed in all its magnificent sublimity of outline;—the household watched in most anxious expectation the soft tread of every

footstep that came and went from Sir Ronald's chamber.—He was still alive, but all hopes of his recovery had disappeared. To Eppie the blow had been instantaneously fatal. Allan hung over his father's couch with the most agonised solicitude. no wound appeared, yet his helmet was cleft, and there was a pressure on the brain which deprived him of sensibility.

As soon as the morning light had rendered objects distinctly visible, they again returned to the court, for the purpose of examining more minutely into the disasters of the night, where they met with nothing but objects of the most revolting character. On searching among the slain, they found Dugald Græme, his head literally dashed to pieces with a stone. Upwards of two hundred were found dead, all of whom were buried in the old church-yard of Cruggleton.—There is one edition of the legend, which says, that Dugald and Eppie Græme were buried in Kirkclaugh, and what seems to give countenance to this latter assertion is a stone, which is evidently a sepulchral monument, still standing in the bottom of the ditch. It has had an inscription cut very deep on it, but

is now quite illegible, nor can a single letter be made out. Some of the old traditions of the country, however, maintain the assertion, that it marks the place of sepulture of the daring freebooter and his Amazonian daughter.

The two ships detached on the previous evening, obeyed the instructions given them, with such promptitude, that they intercepted the Græmes, before they were well clear of the harbour ; and after a short resistance they offered to capitulate, and to surrender the fleet and castle, on condition their lives were spared, and that they should be taken into the knight's service. These terms being agreed to, they landed a messenger to convey the intelligence of the treaty to the castle, and to report that they had sailed for Kirkclaugh to carry its several articles into effect. Many an anxious look was cast across the bay, and many a dubious conjecture hazarded as to the probable cause of their long delay, still dreading some latent duplicity on the part of the Græmes. At last, about mid-day, the sentinel from the battlements gave the alarm that Kirkclaugh was on fire, and immediately afterwards their fleet was

seen emerging from the cloud of smoke, which obscured the eastern side of the bay. They made a formidable appearance, as they approached with a fair wind, having not only the fleet of Dugald Græme, but that of the Featherstones under their convoy. They soon reached the harbour; and the commander of the expedition reported, that leaving the Græmes under a guard, except a few to gain them admission, they ascended to the castle, and could not help admiring its amazing strength, and the immense riches which twenty years of plunder and pillage had amassed within its walls;—that while they were busied making these observations, they became sensible of a dense stifling vapour, which rolled in whirling eddies past the window, and tainted the atmosphere of the room where they stood. A cry of fire arose, and they heard a crackling noise from a suite of upper chambers in which their treasure, and other valuables were kept. They flew to the spot, in hopes of extinguishing it, but it had made so much progress that it defied their utmost efforts to reach it, the whole staircase being filled with flame. They then bethought them of the English prisoners, whom they fortu-

nately got all out, and having also embarked the remainder of the garrison, they carried the fleet in safety beyond the reach of the fire; and then lay on their oars to witness the sublime spectacle it afforded.

A column of smoke, like a slender poplar with its head bending before the breeze, gradually increased in magnitude, tossing and waving, and assuming a thousand fantastic shapes, like a thunder cloud pregnant with the first rudiments of elemental strife—brilliant jets of fire flashed over the battlements, illuminating by their partial scintillations, the dense turbid mass that obscured the sun, and blotted the features from the face of nature.—A crash, like the loudest peal of thunder, followed by a shower of blazing rafters, sparkling like the tail of a rocket in the murky atmosphere, announced that the roof had fallen in; after which the conflagration beginning to subside, they made the best of their way. So perished Kirkclaugh, with all its plunder, and with all its crimes, without leaving a single memorial of what it once was, nor so much as a foundation stone to mark its mighty ichnographic outline. It was farther stated,

that when about to embark on their return, a stranger made his appearance, and begged hard for a passage for Cruggleton. He said he was a retainer of the house of Cardoness---that his name was Donaldson, and that having formerly been in the service of the laird of Kirkclaugh, he had been selected as bearer of a message to Eppie Graeme from Lady Cardoness, the object of which was to endeavour to detach her from her present pursuits, and to induce her to place herself under the protection of his master, as nearest of kin to her deceased mother, and to whom she had become a feudal ward, passing over her father, whose paternal rights had been forfeited by his attainder, and unrevoked sentence of outlawry ;—that as, for certain reasons, he dared not appear before Dugald, he had lingered about the castle for a day or two, in hopes of seeing some person through whom he could open a correspondence with her ; that it was with astonishment he learned she was on a visit to Cruggleton, whither it had been his intention to seek her, had not her sudden return, and subsequent embarkation, deranged the whole of his plans. That the asylum he had to offer was

become doubly necessary to her now, as a discovery had been made at Cardoness within these few days, which had fixed the murder of M'Culloch of Kirkclaugh on her father as accessory before the fact. This was the apprehension of "Dick o' the Hasp," who, after a lapse of more than twenty years, was returning to his old friend Dugald, to claim his stipulated reward for the murder. He was met in a narrow path by the young knight of Cardoness, attended by a few followers, of whom Angus was one, and was instantly recognised by the latter, who gave the alarm, and after a short resist- was taken. Finding that evasion would serve him no purpose, he offered to make some important discoveries respecting Dugald Græme, the particulars of which were as follows;—That in his youth he had paid his addresses to a lady of great beauty and accomplishments of the name of Scott, the daughter of a chief of some note on the border; but she being under an engagement to another, who was one of the powerful family of Elliot, was soon after married to him. They lived in great happiness for some years, she having two children;—that Græme, watching his opportunity

when her husband was absent on some feudal service to his chief, surprised his house, and seizing on the lady and her two infants, carried them to a castle belonging to some of his friends on the English side of the border:—that the disconsolate husband, having discovered the route of the ravishers, made application to the warden of the English marches for assistance to have his family restored, and the treacherous invader of his peace brought to punishment:—that the warder, indignant at the outrage, sent a force to demand the submission of Græme, and the restoration of the lady and children uninjured; and in the event of a refusal, to reduce the castle by force of arms, and to deliver him up to the vengeance of Elliot.

Græme, depending on the strength of the place, and the assistance of his kindred, stood on his defence:—and after a desperate resistance, finding himself reduced to the last extremity, he put the lady and her children to death; and setting fire to the castle, actually cut his way through the besiegers, and effected his escape.—He was then outlawed by both kingdoms, his lands attainted, and a price set on his head.

He afterwards joined a band of moss-troopers under Sir David Armstrong, with whom he remained for some time; but after making a few hair-breadth escapes, he finally left the border, and arrived at Kirkclaugh, as has been shewn.

Although Dick's journey in quest of his reward, was thus unfortunately traversed, he nevertheless met with one, much more consonant to the tenor of his former life—for he was hanged over the battlements in the ensuing morning.

Little remains more to be told. Angus having obtained all necessary information respecting the deaths of Dugald and Eppie Graeme, returned to Cardoness with the intelligence; and the lands of Kirkclaugh reverted back to the house of the feudal chief.—Sir Ronald died the third day, and was interred beside his Rosabelle; and Allan, (now Sir Allan,) having negociated a peace with the Featherstones, set them at liberty, and restored their ships: and so lasting was the friendship thus cemented, that when one of the Featherstones, who joined the Earl of Northumberland, in an insurrection against the Government, was obliged to fly, he was hospitably received by Sir

Allan Kerlie, and had lands assigned him, on which he built a castle on a promontory on the sea shore, the ruins of which bears the name of Castle Feather to this day.

Nor were the Grœmes forgotten: they had a considerable territory made over to them on the outskirts of the domain, on which they were established; and to do away as far as they possibly could, the odium attached to their name, they reversed it, and called themselves Macdougalds; which in process of time was amalgamated with that of families bearing a name something similar; and on an examination of a map of the county, a place will be found which requires only the addition of a single letter, to identify their city of refuge.

We may be censured by some of our fair readers for leaving our hero in a state of single blessedness, when it would have added to the interest of our narrative to have linked his fortunes to those of some smiling dame, and given him a dozen chubby sons and daughters to have peopled his halls. But as we cannot find, in our legendary authority, that such was the case, we can

only hazard a conjecture, that as we know nothing to the contrary, some such accident did really befal him.

Nor have we been more fortunate in our attempts to discover, from contemporary evidence, whether or not the Old Boatman still honours the ruins with his annual visit. The last account we could gather of him was, that about sixty or seventy years ago, a lady of high rank, travelling near the castle in the night-time, was surprised to see them brilliantly illuminated; and on looking up, beheld an armed figure standing on the arch, and waving an immense flag round his head. She mentioned this on her return home, and was immediately told that it was the Spectre Boatman and the Danish Standard. She having never heard of the legend, was terrified at her rencontre, and would never travel in its neighbourhood after sunset again.

Before finally dismissing the present subject, it may be proper, on our part, to give a brief notice or two of the name of M'Culloch, so often mentioned in our legend. In spite of the revolutions by which many great and noble fami-

lies in Galloway have been either consigned to oblivion, or doomed to obscurity, they have still maintained their ground, and even at this day, rank among the highest of the ancient aristocracy of the province.

In the year 1301, when Edward I. invaded Galloway, we find Thomas M'Culloch (probably of Merton), sheriff of the county of Wigtown, which proves, that even at that early period, they were a family of importance. And though they are now branched out into many a devious channel, such as Barholm Ardwell, Torhouse, Auchingool, Knockbrex &c. yet they all look up to the great baronial family of Merton, as their ancient feudal head.

THE

Miller of Eldrig.

THE

MILLER OF ELDRIG.

" Ane fayre chylde sat on ane yird-fast stane,
An' ane chyne of golde roun' his quhyte halse bane,
An' ane key of yron in his lovelie haunde,
An' at his feet lay ane magicke wande.
He wavit the wande o'er the clinte sae grey,
An' schawit the cave quhare ane treasour lay."

SCHIR PATRICK QUHARSON,
An old Gallovidian Tale.

THE belief that hidden treasures were committed to the keeping of certain subordinate spirits, who, for a limited period, contracted to maintain strict watch and ward over them, seems to have formed a leading feature in the superstitious creed of all nations who have made the slightest advances in civilization: the monstrous serpents

of the Gentoos—the Peri-azek of the Persians—the Sheck-damas, or spirit of the mines of the Scandinavians—in short, every country in the habitable globe, wherein the accumulation of gold was held as an object of desire, seems to have appointed their own visionary chancellor over the Exchequer of Plutus, from the terrific Genii of Arabian fiction down to the humble russet-clad brownie of our own native glens.

Many circumstances would lead to the conclusion that this belief arose out of, or rather became the consequence of the lawless state of society that prevailed in the early ages of the world.

That the desire of possessing has been coeval with the recognition of exclusive inheritance, is a fact that will not be disputed; and even at the time when property was confined to flocks and herds, we find the same selfish principle in full operation; but during the currency of these ages of pastoral simplicity, when the wants of man were few, and his supplies ample, the stimulus to unlawful appropriation, though not altogether unknown, might be considered as only in embryo. Nor did the evil, though still increasing with the in-

creasing wants of society, become the demoralising monster it afterwards did, till the introduction of the precious metals as a circulating medium, and equivalent for all the necessaries and luxuries of life. This gave a new impulse to the passions, and introduced a new era into the history of moral delinquency.

At a period when the principle of right and wrong, instead of being weighed in the great hydrostatic balance of impartial justice, had their merits decided by the longest spear, the sharpest sword, or the heaviest battle-axe, it might naturally have been inferred that man could have had few inducements to become a monopolising animal, and when even walls of iron and gates of brass could secure neither his hoarded pelf from the strong arm of power, nor his person from the dagger of the midnight plunderer, it might with equal justice have been assumed that his principal security would have arisen from his retaining nothing in his possession that could either satisfy avarice or tempt cupidity; but the very reverse has still been the case, and the propensity for amassing has increased in proportion to the dangers and dif-

ficulties with which it was surrounded—and even to such an extent did it at last arrive, that the inventive genius of the human race was exhausted in contriving recesses, and excavating laybrinths, for the protection of their worshipped treasures:—nay more,—the aid of the powers of darkness was invoked, and their co-operation secured by spells of unutterable potency; the fiends were dragged by the mysterious adjurations of the wizzard from the regions of everlasting night, and fettered by the word of power, as unwilling centinels over the precious deposit.

Such was the belief of our simple forefathers, a creed which they held in common with the other nations of Europe; nor has it entirely disappeared among their primitive descendants, who inhabit the wild recesses of our native mountains, but still maintains a precarious footing amidst a host of minor superstitions of more recent orign.

The following legend has been selected and arranged, from the recital of an old man who has in his possession a greater mass of superstitious anecdote than any other individual we have ever met with; and the tale itself, divested of its supernatu-

ral agency, we believe to have been true; nor has its veracity ever been questioned by the highly respectable individual who is lineally descended from, and still in possession of the property so acquired, and entailed on him by the Old MILLER OF ELDRIG.

Some time about a hundred years ago, there lived in the parish of Kirkcowan, an honest industrious miller, who had a large family to maintain; which, from the pressure of the times, and the rigour of a severe landlord, long kept him struggling amidst a maze of difficulties, from which he saw no method of extricating himself; and latterly to add to his misfortunes, a host of conflicting evils overtook him as if by a simultaneous compact. His crops failed;—his cattle died;—a person who owed him a sum of money became bankrupt, and fled to a foreign land. His landlord, becoming impatient, distrained for the rent, and carried off the little that disease had spared. In short, such a concatenation of evils, following each other in such rapid succession, would have led an ordinary observer to infer, that he had been singled out as a mark for the arrows of Divine wrath.

Under all these accumulating sufferings, the fortitude of the veteran never forsook him. No impatient murmurs, no captious repinings ever escaped his lips.—He could look back with gratitude for the mercies he had enjoyed, and forward with hope that the scourge which chastened him, would not afflict for ever.

After the lapse of a few years, his affairs began gradually to take a favourable turn; and fortune, as if weary of persecuting, had resolved to recompence him for all his past sufferings. His family successively left him, and formed establishments for themselves; and instead of a burden, became his support. In process of time, his landlord was called on to pay the arears of that debt he owed to "bane and mortal custom," and was succeeded by one of a more merciful character. He became tranquil; he became happy; he could mark with transport, chastened by gratitude, that the sun shone, that the dew fell, that the flowers bloomed, and that the earth gave forth its fruits; the smiles of peace, and the comforts of rustic prosperity shed their genial influence around his humble cottage; and happiness, like a

departing sunbeam, spread a ray of mellow radiance, around the weather-beaten temples of the old miller.

When we stated that all his family had left him, we simply meant all who had arrived at years of maturity. One son still remained at home, the child of his old age, and the almost exclusive object of his affection. John was now in his twelfth year, beautiful as the Houri of eastern superstition, and frolicsome as the kid of his native mountains. While he was, as has already been said, the pride of his doating parents, he was at the same time the universal favourite of the simple inhabitants of the lonely glen in which they resided; and he having been from his infancy permitted to wander about without restraint, his approach was hailed by the juvenile inmates of every cottage with shouts of joyful welcome, and his departure was wept with tears of unfeigned regret.

This unlimited indulgence in his vagrant propensities, was frequently the source of serious alarm to his fond parents; often had the *posse comitatus* of the glen been called out under a ge-

neral search-warrant, and the erratic youth discovered in situations that made the blood recoil with horror at his imminent danger. At one time he was seen on the face of a frightful precipice in search of a hawk's nest, clinging like a lichen to the rock, where one false step must have been fatal to him; at another he was discovered suspended from the branch of an old elm that overhung a dreadful waterfall, sporting and gambling over the boiling abyss, like a swallow in mid air, nor would he ever descend from his perilous acclivity, till a bill of indemnity had passed both houses, and received the royal assent in due form.

One fine day in summer, he went out, as he said, to fish in the burn; but not coming home at the time expected, some person was sent in quest of him, who, after a long and fruitless search, returned with the tidings that he was not to be found. This was the signal, as usual, for a general turn-out, when all his haunts were explored, the pool beneath the cataract was dragged, and every other measure resorted to that they hoped might lead to a discovery, but no trace of him could be found, and the last ray of hope had near-

ly expired, when a joyful cry arose that he was seen approaching. His father, whose agonies had hitherto disqualified him from taking any share in the deliberations of his friends, no sooner heard that he was returning in apparent safety, than his terrors gave way to his passion and he snatched up a rod for the purpose of inflicting a signal chastisement for his delinquency; but on witnessing the woful condition in which the boy was, every other feeling was lost in anxiety and commiseration. His clothes were soiled with mire and literally reduced to rags, his hands and fine features were lacerated to the bone and covered with blood, his head was bare, and his bright sunny locks were matted and twisted like ropes. In short, he was in the most miserable plight that can well be conceived.

All hands were immediately set to work; and whilst one party were busily employed in bathing, and applying styptics to his wounds, and freeing him from the filth, in which his person was shrouded, another were overwhelming him with an inundation of questions, as to where he had been, and

how he came to be mangled in such a shocking manner,—to all of which he listened without offering the least reply; maintaining, on the contrary, an inflexible silence, which neither the entreaties nor threats of his parents could induce him to break, till, wearied to death with their importunities, he desired to be put to bed, and left to his repose, which was reluctantly complied with, after every attempt to elicit an explanation had failed.

In the meantime, however, a council of his friends, who assembled for the purpose of solemn investigation, supplied the place of facts, of which they were deficient, with abundance of surmises and conjectures; for, whilst one party roundly asserted, that in his lonely haunts he had met some wandering detachment of fairies, who had attempted to carry him off to fairy-land, and that, after dragging him

> "Through bush, and through briar,
> Through bog, and through mire,"

they had been compelled to relinquish him, the rape having been committed in broad day-light, and in the face of the blessed sun, when their

power to do mischief is very limited: Others surmised, that as he had been in the habit of playing off a number of practical jokes on an old woman, who was reputed a witch, such as tormenting her favourite cat, putting gunpowder into her tobacco-pipe, and others of a similar nature, for these she had repeatedly been heard to vow vengeance against him;—that she had watched an opportunity of seizing him in an unguarded moment, and had handed him over to one of her familiars, from whose rough discipline he had escaped in such a woful state of disarray. This being agreed to on all hands as the most probable conjecture, the council broke up. The seniors, retiring to their respective homes, held jarring converse on the extent of punishment that should be awarded, should any thing come out, on the second examination of the boy, to inculpate her. The younger party, still muttering threats, dark and portentous, were for proceeding to immediate extremities, without farther proof, had they not been withheld by the others. They declared, however, that, should any thing like the shadow of evidence appear against her, they would for

once anticipate the sword of justice, and send her in search of the celestial mansions, on the wings of a flaming tar-barrel.

Some days elapsed before the boy was so well as to hold converse with his friends, and when he did speak, it was only on general subjects: For, as soon as his misfortunes were so much as even hinted at, every muscle of his countenance seemed convulsed with agony, which, after exhibiting itself in every shade of mental suffering, subsided into a fit of sullen and inflexible taciturnity. This led to a new train of conjectures on the mysterious accident. For, whilst some asserted that he was under the baleful influence of an evil eye, others gave it as their decided opinion, that the original was still in fairy-land, while the counterfeit in their possession, left them as a most unworthy representative of their beautiful favourite, was perhaps a log of wood, or, what was more likely, one of their own imps, who had been transformed into his partial likeness, by the delusive arts of these pigmy dealers in the metempsychosis.

Acting on this belief, they would have proceed-

ed to immediate trial by the fiery ordeal, had they not been restrained by another reflection, which was, that although nothing could be more passive, under the action of fire, than a billet of wood; yet, on the other hand, it was equally probable, that a "spirit from the dark abyss" might not possess sufficient philosophy to endure the experiment without wincing under its infliction.—Nay, so capricious were they supposed to be, that, in their hurry to escape from the atmosphere of the hostile element, they were in the habit of exploding on the spot, with a report like a hand-grenade, and made no scruple to carry either the roof, or side of the house, with them in their retreat, without once reflecting on the injury the proprietor might thereby sustain. For these last reasons, they were induced to permit things to remain as they were for a short time, in the hope that something might turn out in the chapter of accidents, that would enable them to throw some additional light on this most mysterious affair.

A few days afterwards, when the youth had attained to such a state of convalescence as to be enabled to leave his bed, he begged his father to

accompany him in a short walk; and having imperceptibly drawn him into a sequestered corner of the glen, he, with much hesitation, and some embarrassment, commenced by informing him, that although the present was an opportunity he had most anxiously wished for, yet, from the limited nature of the communication he was permitted to make, he was afraid it would afford little satisfaction to a parent whom he had so much reason to honour and respect, and that he felt nothing so painful as the circumstance of possessing a secret, which he dared not communicate even to him;—that such, however, was his hard destiny, and patient submission was the only alternative left him. He solemnly assured him, that the dreadful mysteries in his possession, and to which his fortunes were indissolubly linked, were not of his own seeking, but imposed on him by a chain of events, over which he neither then, nor at any subsequent period, could ever possess the slightest control, and the key to which must forever remain locked up in the innermost recesses of his own bosom, otherwise a terrible fate awaited him;—that, in all time coming, every thing connected

with his own fortunes, that he dared communicate, should be done freely, and without any solicitation; and when he was silent on any subject that might appear mysterious, he begged that they would abstain from harassing him with questions, which could answer no other purpose, than that of rendering him miserable, without the possibility of eliciting any thing from him on these forbidden subjects. He expressed his sincere regret, at being thus compelled, to dictate to parents, whose every word had hitherto been a law to him. But as no other alternative was left him, he considered it his duty to be as explicit, as the nature of his obligations would permit him. No apparent want of filial affection on his part would, he trusted, induce them to seek farther explanations, nor ever again return to the revolting subject, which, even at that moment, froze the current of life in his bosom, and shed a moral mildew over all the nobler energies of his soul. His sufferings here became evident. He seated himself on a stone, and clasping his hands together, bowed his head on his knees, and gave way to his feelings. His lips moved, but no sound was heard. At last, slowly

raising himself, he, in a hurried manner, begged his father would bear with him a little longer, as he had still a task to perform in which he promised to be brief, as he felt himself at that moment unequal to a protracted narrative.

He then proceeded to state, that it had been communicated to him, that as soon as he had reached his sixteenth year, he would discover a hidden treasure, which would eventually lay the foundation of his future happiness and prosperity, and which would forever emancipate him from that state of mysterious thraldom in which he was to be held during the intervening period ;—that previous to the arrival of that happy day, however, many dreadful trials awaited him ; that he must become not only acquainted with, but a participator in, scenes of horror of which human language could never convey an adequate idea, nor could human eye behold, unassisted by a superior intelligence, without sinking forever under the blight of the dreadful vision :—and what must add to their appalling terrors, was the cheerless prospect, that they must be endured alone, and without a murmur.

He therefore earnestly begged that at those periods when he was compelled to absent himself, no attempts should be made, on the part of his friends, either to detain or watch him, as, in either case, they must not only prove abortive in themselves, but would add materially to his sufferings; —that no human power could shorten the time of his probation one minute, but that much might be done on their part, by a prudent forbearance, to render it more tolerable. He cautioned his father against being over communicative amongst his friends, respecting this mysterious subject; observing, that while with his mother he wished him to have no reserve, with others he trusted he would exercise his own discretion, on a subject where discussion could only lead to idle surmise or bootless investigation—and now, appearing to suffer under exhaustion of spirit, he expressed a wish to return home.

During this interview, the boy seemed to be labouring under some mysterious restraint: His agitation sometimes amounted to agony, which manifested itself by the convulsive shiverings which shook his frame—by his eye wildly fixed

on vacancy, and his voice, which occasionally sunk to whispers, as if conscious of the presence of a third person whom he dared not recognise.

They returned in silence, each occupied by his own sad reflections, and from that day forward, the youth's manners and appearance underwent such a total change, as in some measure to justify the surmises of his friends, as before stated. All that elastic playfulness of character, that wild exuberance of youthful joy, the perpetual smile that wantoned round his mouth, and dimpled his cheek, the quips and pranks that not only set the table in a roar, but often the village in an uproar, all, all were fled, and fled forever! A pale, sickly melancholy had supplanted the roses and lilies of blooming health, and spread a cast of pensive thoughtfulness and chilling reserve over his still beautiful features, his steps were slow, solemn, and measured; he no longer sought the society of his hitherto favoured associates, but shunned with as much avidity, as he once had courted them; he seemed by one vast stride to have overstepped the period of adolescence altogether, as his whole thoughts, words and actions, were those of a man ripe in years, and mature in experience.

One year of his probation glided silently away. He had in a few instances absented himself, and returned much in the same state as at first; but his parents, having been prepared to expect those aberrations, were less affected than they otherwise might have been, and permitted them to pass over as quietly as possible.

The minister of the parish having heard something of these mysterious occurrences, which he, with much seeming probability, attributed to some mental illusion, sent for the miller, and after having learned from him all that he could respecting them, he earnestly exhorted him to be frequent in his religious exercises, to cause his son daily to read a portion of the holy scriptures, and if still necessary, he suggested the propriety of laying him under some personal restraint, till he should be weaned from these solitary wandering propensities, and visionary hallucinations, which were forever sapping the foundations of his health and spirits. The miller promised to be guided by his counsel, should circumstances in future render it necessary.

Another year passed away without producing

any occurrence worthy of notice. The boy's fits of absence were more frequent, and his bodily sufferings seemed to increase in proportion. He was sometimes confined a week after one of these excursions before he could go abroad again. Another particular may be noted here, namely, that during the first year he always disappeared early in the day, and in most instances returned towards evening; but now he seldom left home till twilight, and the night was sometimes far advanced before he came back.

At last the third and final year of his noviciate commenced, and brought along with it such an accumulation of misery as threatened soon to terminate his misfortunes by death. His whole manner and appearance underwent a dreadful change. His visage, from being pale, became haggard and ghastly—his eyes wild and staring, his step quick and irregular; often starting and looking around with cautious dread, as if he expected at every corner to encounter a lurking foe. He also absented himself more frequently, and always in the night-time. Seldom a week now elapsed, without his spending a night from

home, and when he returned, it was in such a state of exhaustion, that he required help to undress himself.

His friends began now in earnest to be alarmed for his life, and urged his father, by every argument their fears could suggest, to interpose his authority, and detain him at home, by conciliation if possible, but should he become refractory, to have recourse to coercion. To this he at last gave a reluctant consent, in so far as parental authority might be extended without violence, declaring at the same time, that he would never lend his sanction to stronger measures than might be obtained by exhortation or command. He therefore took an early opportunity of laying the sum of this conference before his son, and earnestly begged that he would make an effort to break the fetters in which he was bound, and become once more amenable to the laws which knit society together—laws, which formed the most essential link in the chain of social order, and which he had violated, by withdrawing himself from his species, and forming a connexion with a race of beings over whom their moral influence could not be extended.

He therefore commanded him, on his filial allegiance, to refrain from absenting himself without his special permission, and to implore the forgiveness of God for former derelictions, and for assistance in enabling him to break the unhallowed compact into which he had been inadvertently drawn.

The boy listened to this address with tears streaming from his eyes, and could only reply by a mournful shake of the head, and a wild exclamation of, "O, father, remember what I told you, and do not kill me outright!"

His friends, still bent on extremities, urged his father to try another experiment on him. As they knew the youth had a deep sense of his religious duties, they thought, by engaging him in the solemn exercises of devotion about the time he usually disappeared, they would detain him by protracting it till the fatal hour was past, and, by that means, sever the mystic bonds which, in the simplicity of their hearts, they believed in some manner linked his destiny with that of some agent of the world of spirits. Acting on this hope, as soon as the evening closed in, the household were

assembled for family worship, in which the youth joined with an ardour of feeling, which seemed to justify their most sanguine hopes; but in an instant, when all eyes were fixed on him, he gave a sudden start and sprung from his seat. Those that were nearest attempted to lay hold on him, but with a single bound, he eluded their grasp, and disappeared in a moment.

On another occasion, (for his nocturnal wanderings were now constant and unremitting), his friends were resolved to be more on their guard; and when called together for the purpose of offering up the evening sacrifice, they secured the door by locking it, and carrying away the key. The boy became sensible of their intentions, and instantly took the alarm. His whole manner became agitated;—he trembled as in an ague fit;—large drops of cold sweat bedewed his temples, and, falling on his knees, he implored mercy in the most pathetic terms; assuring them, that they might kill, but could not detain him, and declaring that he could not join in the service of the evening, till restored fully to his liberty.

His father seemed moved by his agony, and

made an effort to rise, for the purpose of unlocking the door, but was restrained by his other friends, who exhorted him to be firm for his son's sake, as now was the time to free him from the thraldom in which he was held by some imp of darkness, who had inveigled him into some unholy compact, which was alike subversive of his health and peace of mind in this world, and his hopes of happiness in the next. Silenced, though not convinced by their reasoning, he was about to resume his seat, when the boy started up, and uttering the most piercing screams, called out,—"Oh! they come, they come! For my sake, for your own sakes, for God's sake detain me not a moment longer—a single moment may be fatal to us all.!" When, clasping his hands, and casting up his eyes, with a look of unutterable despair, he exclaimed, "O, have mercy heaven, or I am lost forever." At that instant they became sensible of a low moaning sound, like the noise of a distant waterfall, which seemed rapidly to approach, and with increasing intonation. The evening was calm, not a breath sighed through the windows of the flexible poplar, nor awoke the moun-

tain fern from its twilight repose into a graceful genuflexion, yet as the voice drew nearer, it bore some resemblance to the howl of a mighty tempest, combined with the rush of a descending cataract; the cottage was shaken to its foundation, and heaved as if tossed on the billows of an earthquake—every cheek was blanched with terror, and the youth, falling on his knees, cried, with a voice of piercing agony, "Oh, save my father! he is innocent."

The old man now rose, with dignity in his manner, and demanding the key, opened the door, and said, "Go, my unhappy son, and fulfil your destinies, whatever they may be; only, before you depart, implore the protection of Almighty God." The boy, with an impressive solemnity of manner, grasped his hand, and exclaimed, "May God bless you, my father, and protect me," and darting out, disappeared amidst the gloom.

A single week of the probationary period was only now to run—one week more, and John will have attained his sixteenth year, when health, liberty and opulence, his promised rewards, are to be realised; and yet, near as the day of his

emancipation was, his ghastly countenance and emaciated figure, afforded little room for hope to rest on, that he should ever enjoy any of these prospective blessings. His constitution, long on the decline, seemed of late to be rapidly giving way under the pressure of his bodily and mental sufferings. He was now so weak that he required assistance, both in rising and lying down ;—a feverish thirst consumed his vitals, and a hectic bloom threw a shade of unearthly beauty over his sunken features and cadaverous skin ;—indeed, so far as short-sighted man could set a date to mortal existence, his earthly pilgrimage seemed drawing near its termination.

It appeared surprising to his friends, that considering the state of helpless debility in which he lingered throughout the early part of the day, he should have been enabled to have left his home as the shades of evening closed in, and to have wandered none knew where, during the dreary watch of a bleak December night, exposed to the chilling blasts and hissing tempest of a wintry sky, without sinking under the effort :—but strange as it might appear, still, as the evening advanced,

he seemed to be inspired with fresh ardour, and flitted about the house with the noiseless step of an animated shadow. As the time of his departure drew near, he became restless and uneasy, frequently going to the door, and looking out as if in expectation of something he wished, yet dreaded to see, till at last he finally disappeared, but so quietly that a considerable time often elapsed before his absence was discovered.

The eventful morning at last dawned, that was to wind up the destinies, and terminate the sufferings of the miller's once beautiful son. The boy had been just put to bed, and some simple restorative administered to him, when he sunk into a slumber; but so restless and disturbed did he appear during its continuance, that his mother was more than once on the point of wakening him. He tossed his arms about with violent gestures, sometimes his hands were spread and held up, as in the act of supplication, and the next moment they were firmly clenched and placed in the attitude of defiance—his features at the same time, changing with the rapidity of thought, to the expression of the most opposite passions. At

last a throe of keener agony awoke him;—he started up, and seeing his mother seated beside him, told her that he could not rest, and begged she would call his father, as he wished to spend as much of the day as was permitted him, in exercises of devotion. This was cheerfully complied with, and it passed over in alternate supplications at the throne of grace, and praises offered up from hearts overflowing with gratitude for past mercies, and imploring with humble confidence, the protection of Him, who " rides the whirlwind, and rules the storm."

The short winter day began now to close in, with all the indications of an approaching tempest; the wind swept in hollow gusts down the glen, emitting a sullen murmur as it raved through the leafless forest;—huge masses of vapour, dark and lowering, were borne before it. Onwards they came, in dreadful succession, volume after volume, tumbling and rolling like the smoke of a volcano, and assuming the most fantastic shapes as they whirled in rapid alternation around the brow of a neighbouring mountain. Peals of distant thunder reverberated in trembling echoes from

hill to hill; sleet, mingled with hail, came with bitter fury, borne on before the resistless blast. The spirit of the storm had whetted his arrows, and seemed to be approaching in all his terrors. The boy had arisen, and appeared more collected than he had for some time been. He spoke of the perils of the approaching evening with a degree of freedom he had never hitherto done, and of the tempest that darkened its features, as of something he had not only foreseen, but as a necessary instrument, in the hands of an invisible agent, for bringing about his ultimate success.

He cautioned them against being too much alarmed on his account, as he trusted, that with whatever dread it might inspire others, it would pass harmless over his own head.

He hinted at the possibility of his not returning that night; and should that be the case, he assured them it should rather be received as a proof that his sufferings had met the promised reward, than the source of idle terror. He next laid a solemn injunction on them, that they should not leave the house till the sun rose, when they were to search for him down the glen, where, in all

probability, he would be found, and in such a situation as to require their aid. He said he was well aware that his friends would not retire to rest that night, but would spend the greater part of it in prayer. He begged that his father would be earnest in his supplications in his behalf; and that he, relying with full confidence in the divine protection, left them with an assurance that their next meeting should be under happier circumstances, and that the next morning sun that shone on him, should witness his final emancipation from the state of moral subjugation in which he had so long been held, and would open up a vista of prospective happiness in which they should all participate, unimpaired by any of these mysterious wanderings, which had rendered his few past years so miserable. He again strictly cautioned them against being induced to venture out, or to permit any circumstance, how apparently alarming soever it might be, to decoy them over the threshold that night for a single moment, as, by doing so, they would compromise their own safety, without the possibility of serving him.

His friends were rejoiced to witness his altered

manner and cheerful countenance; but his father, who saw deeper, soon discovered that his firmness was all assumed, in which idea he was confirmed by his fluctuating features and shivering frame, which seemed to shrink from the perils he was that night doomed to encounter. As the storm increased his terrors appeared to keep pace with it. He cast many a look of dismay to the door; and at last, clasping his hands in agony, he cried, in a subdued voice, "May God protect you all, and grant we may once more meet in safety,"—so saying he rushed out of the house.

His departure seemed to be the signal for the prince of the powers of the air to unchain his subordinate spirits, and to pour out the vials of infernal wrath on the heads of a guilty world. The tempest increased with tenfold fury, bearing every thing before it in its resistless career;—the thunder bellowed with unremitting succession; the lightning flashed in awful corruscations; the mingled hail, sleet, and rain descended in torrents; the brook was swollen to a river, and rushed past with the noise of a cataract;—order and organisation seemed fast sinking under their last final struggle, and the

prediction of the poet appeared about to be verified, that "chaos was come again."

This dreadful turmoil continued till midnight, nay, rather increased. A mystic, undefinable horror was written in legible characters on every countenance, under the miller's humble roof; they wished for, yet trembled at the approach of morning—every eye was filled with tears, and every heart oppressed with the darkest forebodings. At last a flash of lightning, so intensely vivid that it filled the whole house with its radiance, was succeeded by a peal so astonishing, that the foundations of the earth seemed to vibrate to its centre, and of such continuance that it might well have been mistaken for the last agonised groan of expiring nature. As soon as it subsided, the miller exclaimed, "Thank God the bolt is now fallen, and the storm will soon pass away."

The event justified his prediction, for soon after, the thunders began to die away in distant murmurs, the voice of the tempest was hushed into silence, and the contending elements, as if exhausted by their late dreadful conflict, sunk into repose.

Day now dawned, and by the time the morning service was over, the sun had risen, when all rushed out.—But what a scene of desolation met the eye! Trees, shivered by lightning or overturned by the fury of the blast, lay scattered around in every direction; houses, denuded of their coverings, had left their humble inmates exposed to the fury of the elements; huge masses of rock had detached themselves from the mountain, and tumbling down, obstructed the channel of the rivulet that flowed by, which, though it had now subsided within its banks, still continued to brawl and murmur with impatient velocity. A dense coronet of dusky vapour rested on the mountain's brow; but so still and motionless did it appear, and its figure was defined by such a sharpness of outline, that it well might have been mistaken for an antient fortress, whose turrets and battlements were gilded by the beams of the rising sun. The search now commenced according to the instructions they had received, and they proceeded down the glen by the side of the burn, following all its sinuosities, and examining every place with the minutest scrutiny, but no traces of the

boy could be found. At last, when they were on the point of abandoning their search in that direction, his father, who was still foremost, informed them that he had discovered the fresh print of his feet. This gave a new stimulus to their efforts, and on following a little farther down, they came to a large oak tree, which grew on the very brink of the stream, and which had been struck with lightning and cleft in two, the one half falling across the burn, and the other threatening to follow on the very first blast of wind. A considerable portion of the bank had been forced into the stream by the electric fluid, which left a deep excavation from the edge of the water to the distance of some hundred yards backwards. At the bottom of this chasm the youth was discovered seated on a stone, but in such a state of exhaustion, that he appeared to be deprived of both speech and motion; he seemed however to be conscious of their approach, as a faint smile played upon his lips, but all muscular action was suspended. They raised him in their arms, and were about to remove him, when he made an effort with his hand, and pointed to the opposite

bank. Their eyes followed the direction of his finger, and they discovered a large copper vessel, of very antique workmanship, deeply embedded in the earth.—A very little labour freed it from the place where, in all probability, it had reposed for ages; and whatever were its contents, it required two of the stoutest men present to remove it from its place of concealment. John was carried home (nor was the precious vessel forgotten,) where, by care and proper treatment, he was soon restored to his wonted health, nor did he ever afterwards manifest the slightest desire to return to his nocturnal wanderings.

No person (that is to say, the world,) ever knew, what the mighty vase contained; but there are certain analogies, from which something may be gathered, such as, that about a year or two afterwards, an extensive landed proprietor in a neighbouring parish, whose circumstances having got into a state of embarrassment, was reduced to the necessity of disposing of four farms by public sale.

One fine morning, in June, the miller's old Bucephalus was led to the door, accompanied

by a beautiful Galloway poney for his favourite son. They mounted, being equipped as if for a long journey, and their departure gave rise to much speculation in the neighbourhood, both as to its distance and object. In a few weeks, however, they returned from Edinburgh, the miller having effected the purchase of the above property; and he was hailed by the joyful acclamations of his rustic neighbours as "Laird of Craigancogle."

He lived many years after these events had passed away; nor would he ever leave the mill, nor abandon his humble profession;—and when at last he was gathered to his fathers, it was found that the rights of primogeniture had been set aside in favour of his youngest son; nor did the arrangement give rise to the slightest feeling of discontent in the bosoms of his elder brethren.—They all lived in the greatest harmony together, and ever experienced from John the kindest attention.

Although his health was now fully established, yet his spirits never rose to their former tone. He was ever pleasant—sometimes cheerful—but

never joyous; on the contrary, a shade of pensive melancholy mingled itself with every thing he did or said. In process of time, however, he cast the eyes of affection on a blooming maiden, the daughter of a neighbouring gentleman, who, after a year's probation, suffered herself at last to be led to the altar, and by her he had a numerous family, whose descendants inherit the property, so obtained, to this day.

THE

Battle of Cairnholy.

THE

BATTLE OF CAIRNHOLY.

"Soon as I tread the rush-clad vale,
Wild fancy feels the clasping mail;
The rancour of a thousand years
Glows in my breast; again I burn
To see the bannered pomp of war return,
And mark beneath the moon, the silver light of spears."

LEYDEN.

THAT many desperate conflicts took place among the nobility of Scotland, during the period when the feudal system was in full vigour, is a fact well established.

But with whatever degree of rancour these feuds were maintained, still the extent of the means of the contending parties, being confined in most cases to their own immediate vassals and friends,

they were of too little importance to become objects of national interest, and were therefore suffered to sink into oblivion, with the exception of a few which have either been recorded by history or handed down by tradition; and though the following is only of the latter description, yet it carries along with it too many facts and circumstances, not to have truth for its anchor to rest on.

That the slow, though still progressive march of civilization, both moral and political, commenced in the East, and has for more than three thousand years, been almost imperceptibly proceeding westward, is a fact supported by the united testimonies of philosophers and historians, both antient and modern. And this universal hypothesis may be applied with equal justice to some individual states, and to none with greater propriety than Scotland. For while the residence of the Court, and the intercourse with the continent from our eastern shores, gave opportunities for a gradual improvement in our national habits and manners, the whole of the west, and southern districts of the kingdom, lay buried in more than Egyptian darkness.

It would be only an unnecessary waste of time to enter into a minute investigation of the prevailing customs of those barbarous ages, when every lord was a sovereign, every castle a fortress garrisoned by his adherents, and every serf a slave of the soil—where the chief never entered the domain of his neighbour, but with arms in his hands, and for purposes of hostility, and whose avant-couriers were the sword and the firebrand.

During this order of things, that a continual system of aggression and retribution should have been maintained, is what might naturally have been expected; nor was any class of society altogether exempted from military service, as it was nothing uncommon to find the sacred dignitaries of the church lay aside the mitre and the stole for the helmet and breast-plate; and amidst the strife of contending factions, mingle the clash of arms with the responses of the altar.

There are many traditions still to be met with in Galloway, that tell of battles fought, and castles sacked and burnt, by chiefs whose very names are forgot, or but dubiously recorded. From one of these we have selected the following narrative.

which, supported as it is by a chain of circumstantial evidence, leads the enquiring antiquary to the conclusion, that it has been on a more extensive scale than those that decided the fate of a barony almost ever were.

Sometime about the year 1315, King Robert Bruce sent his brother Edward to dislodge the English garrisons from the several strong-holds they still were possessed of in Galloway.

Edward, accompanied by the Earl of Douglas, entered the principality by Dumfries, and after reducing every place that held out against him, at last invested Cruive Castle, a place of considerable strength on the banks of the Cree, about three miles above the village of Newton-Stewart, better known in later times by the name of Castle-Stewart. This being a place situated in a strong position, and having a numerous garrison, held out against the efforts of the assailants, with a degree of vigour altogether unexpected, and consequently unprovided for. What induced the besieged to make a more determined resistance than otherwise they might have done, was a promise of im-

mediate relief, held out by Thomas * Bishop of Whithorn, who was encamped in Sorby with fifteen thousand men. Although little credit is to be attached to this statement in the tradition, as it is extremely improbable that an army of such magnitude, and in possession of the granary of the province, should have looked tamely on, and seen their strong-holds falling away in succession to a force that did not exceed one thousand men—however, such is the tradition, and we give it without farther comment. The reverend bishop, however, was no tyro in military tactics: for he formed a plan, in the execution of which, had he succeeded, he would have placed the two chiefs in a situation of imminent peril, and either have compelled them to give battle against an overwhelming superiority of numbers, or else have adopted the equally dangerous measure of hazarding a retreat, through a country in possession of the enemy, and completely cut off from their resources.

In carrying his plan into effect, he struck his camp, and advanced to Wigtown, for the appa-

* He swore fealty to Edward in 1296. Keith's catalogue of Scottish Bishops, page 244.—Murray's Literary History of Galloway, page 66.

rently avowed purpose of fighting Bruce and raising the siege, but having privately procured guides who were acquainted with the low fords of the river, his intention was to pass to the east side, at the place where the village of Creetown now stands, before the prince was aware, and by this manœuvre, throw himself betwixt him and his resources in his rear, whereby he must either have fought the Bishop on his own terms, or else have attempted a retreat through the upper district of the county, into Carrick, the greater part of which line of march was in the hands of the English. These would have been a choice of evils equally ruinous in their tendency, had they not been foreseen, and provided against. For Bruce, who had the best information of the Bishop's motions, no sooner learned that he was advancing, than, converting the siege into a blockade, under the command of Douglas, he selected five hundred of his best troops, and marched southward,—not for the purpose of giving battle, but to watch his adversary's motions, and to act as circumstances might require. The Bishop, either not aware of the approach of Bruce, or what is more probable, despising his trifling force,

appeared determined not to hazard the derangement of his original plans, by a partial combat, which the other could either abide or decline at pleasure, he left Wigtown, therefore, early on the ensuing morning, and marched boldly for the fords.

There is a long level stripe of land that extends for about six miles along the banks of the Cree, from Wigtown to near the village of Newton-Stewart, and varying from two miles, to half a mile in breadth. This has, at some remote period of time, been covered by the sea. And although a portion of it is now under cultivation, and remarkably productive, yet, at the period alluded to, tradition says it was an almost impassable morass. Through this lay the only road to the low fords of the river. A small stream intersects it within about two miles of Wigtown, which has, from the circumstances alluded to in the legend, acquired a degree of celebrity it never otherwise would have done, being known by the name of the "Bishop's Burn" to this day.

The season was the beginning of winter. A succession of heavy rains had swollen every paltry stream into a river; and in his progress through

the morass, the Bishop had to struggle with difficulties against which he was altogether unprovided.

To bring along with him any beast of burden he found impossible; consequently, the whole of his camp-equipage and provisions were abandoned, except what his men could carry on their backs. Resolved, however, to surmount every obstacle, and not to forego a plan from which he anticipated such brilliant results, he continued to plunge and flounder on till he came to the aforesaid burn; but here he was brought to a dead halt: the stream had overflowed its banks, and was impassable.

Unprovided with every thing, even timber to have constructed a raft, his eyes were opened to his true situation. Gladly would he have retraced his steps, and have abandoned his project altogether. But that was now no longer in his power: For Bruce, ever on the watch for an advantage, no sooner saw his army fairly in the morass, than he followed up his rear, and fetching a circuit round the hill on which Wigtown stands, presented himself before the English camp. The bag-

gage guard, left by the Bishop, being superior in numbers to Prince Edward, marched boldly out and offered him battle, which he did not decline. A short but furious contest ensued, which ended in the total rout of the guard, who fled in on the main body, leaving the whole camp at the mercy of the victors, which they instantly set on fire. A small knoll, about half a mile beyond Wigtown, still bears the name of the "Skirmish Knowe," and the field on which the camp stood, the "Burnt Brae."

The first notice the Bishop had of the action, was the smoke and flames rising in dark spiral eddies far above the town, and the disorderly flight of the guard, followed by the victors, who were cutting them off in detail. He ordered his rear division to face about, and cover their retreat. This they did with as much alacrity as they could, but such was the insecurity of their footing, and the treacherous nature of the marsh, which would not admit of a single yard of deviation from the narrow path with impunity, that before they could reach the solid ground, the fugitives were driven in on their front with fury,

rendering the whole an inextricable mass of confusion. Many were killed, and many more perished in the swamp; and had not the Bishop marched to their relief with the main body, inevitable destruction must have overtaken them all.

Bruce did not rest satisfied with this partial success, but availing himself of the advantages he had thereby obtained, took possession of the only pass into the morass, where, posting his small force to the best advantage, for both guarding it and preventing surprise, he sat down quietly to await the issue of the Bishop's temerity.

The rains continued without any abatement for the space of fourteen days: The English troops were in most instances standing knee-deep in water, without even so much as a patch of dry ground to lie down on—destitute of shelter from the soaking rains and rigours of the season, with their scanty stock of provisions rapidly dwindling away, and no prospect of a supply—with an impassable river in their front, famine staring them in the face, disease raging in their camp, if camp it might be called—all was anarchy, confusion and despair.

Many desperate, but ineffectual attempts were made to regain the firm ground they had left; but Bruce, though far inferior in numbers, was nevertheless in possession of advantages which more than counterbalanced this physical disparity, as his troops, being plentifully supplied with food, and all under shelter, were in the best possible state of discipline, high in spirits, and eager for an opportunity of retaliating the wrongs they had suffered;—nor did the nature of the ground admit of a display of the Bishop's military talents, as he could only send, along the narrow and precarious path, column after column, contracted in their front, and exhausted by their efforts to come into contact with their enemies;—these were as invariably driven back before they could reach ground on which they could deploy into line, and that in most instances with great loss, till at last, despairing of success, they desisted from any farther attempts that way.

At last, however, the rains abated—the floods fell—the sun shone forth—the fatal burn was passed—and they approached the fords of the river; which being still swollen by the recent

inundation, was declared by the guides to be as yet impassable. However, as no alternative appeared to them so dreadful as remaining where they were, they determined on making the attempt. Many were carried away by the force of the current before they reached the opposite shore, and even those that got over were in such a state of exhaustion, that they must have fallen an easy prey to a very feeble enemy.*

The moment Prince Edward discovered that the Bishop meant to attempt the river, he despatched a messenger to the Earl, directing him to raise the siege, and join him at Creetown, as he was determined to bring the English to battle at all hazards.

The reverend general had by this time abandoned all idea of offensive operations, and intent on saving the remains of his army, meditated a retreat to Kirkcudbright, (it being still in possession of the English,) and from thence home by sea.

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* Many curious relicts of this ill-fated march have been found from time to time in the bed of the river, such as pieces of armour, spear-heads—a brass sword &c.

Of this intention Bruce seemed to have been fully aware, as, before the former had got a mile in advance, the latter had crossed over, and was in full march after him, slaying without mercy all that fell into his hands. Being fully determined to bring on a general engagement, he overtook the rear at a place called Garrocher, about two miles beyond Creetown, on which he commenced a most furious assault. The Bishop maintained a kind of Parthian retreat for about a mile farther, when finding every attempt to escape without fighting impossible, and having now attained ground that would enable him to bring his whole forces into action, he faced about, and putting his army in array of battle, firmly awaited the onset. A few minutes placed the hostile lines in front of each other, and a terrible encounter ensued, which soon strewed the field with the wounded and dying. But here the temerity of Bruce had almost led to results fatal to his cause, for while he was pressing with his whole force the centre of the English lines, the Bishop ordered his two wings to close in on him, turn his flanks, and attack his rear. A thick haze

having come on, which concealed the contending armies from each other, except where in actual contact, the evolution was performed amidst the obscurity of the cloudy mantle in which they were shrouded, nor was the change of position discovered by Bruce till its effects were felt. This was the moment when the good genius of the Prince seemed to have deserted him. Pressed on all sides by such an overwhelming superiority, his ranks were rapidly thinning around him; and although he effected all that desperate valour could achieve, yet victory seemed on the eve of deserting his standard, and was hovering over the mitred head of his formidable adversary, when all at once there arose such a shout on the right of the Bishop's lines, that the vaulted concave of heaven echoed back the portentous acclamation. Douglas was arrived, and like the blast of the desert, was bearing every thing before him in his resistless career. Terror and dismay seized the host of England, who, alike ignorant of the number or position of the fresh assailants, began to waver in their ranks. The Bishop became sensible that, worn out by disease, and unnerved by famine, they could not

maintain the conflict much longer, whatever their numercial superiority might be. Not a moment was to be lost. He selected a chosen body of troops, and placing himself at their head, he ordered a retreat to be sounded, covering in this manner the rear of his vanquished army. The Scottish leaders, enraged to see their prey snatched, as it were, from their very grasp, redoubled their efforts to bring the enemy once more to close action. But the Bishop, like a watchful general, ever on the alert, and appearing to have caught fresh energy from the dangers that surrounded him, presented a formidable front as often as a new assault was given, and, animating his troops, both by his exhortations and example, more than once compelled the fiery chieftains to retrace their steps. In this manner, the tide of battle rolled on; it past the farms of Cambret and Claughred, and approached the sea at Kirkdale. Here a considerable stream, with high precipitous banks, intersected the line of march. The Bishop saw, at one glance, the perils to be encountered in passing, and the advantages to be reaped if once safely over. He made the best

arrangement his unfortunate circumstances would admit of. He strengthened his rear-guard, already worn out with fatigue, and thinned by successive attacks. He issued his final orders to his army to pass, with as much rapidity and in as good order as they could, and to form on the opposite bank, for the purpose of covering his retreat. He then faced about, and awaited the coming of the chiefs, who were hanging like a thunder cloud on his rear.

It would be an idle waste of time to occupy it in a fanciful description of a battle, whose very existence rests on traditionary evidence, and a few monumental remains:—it is only necessary to add, that the Bishop, like a skilful general, did every thing in his power to animate the courage of his despouding army, but all in vain:—the onset of the Scots was irresistible. At last, putting himself at the head of that portion of his rear-guard which still remained unbroken, he led them on to a final effort, where, meeting with Douglas in the strife, he was by him felled to the ground. The route now became general,—it was no longer a contest, but a carnage; and with such vigour was the pur-

suit followed up, that it is said very few of this mighty army ever reached Kirkcudbright. The Bishop was interred near where he fell, on the top of a small knoll in front of the farm house; the grave is hewn out of the solid rock to a considerable depth, and its aperture is covered with a flat stone of more than two tons weight, and has given name to the farm on which it stands, (Cairnholy); and another farm about a mile farther up the glen, still bears the name of "Claughred," (Cleugh-raid,) it being in the line of the contending armies. One edition of the legend calls him Prior instead of Bishop; but as Whithorn was a Bishoprick, and the seat of the Bishops of Galloway, we have given the latter the preference; and that he fell in an attempt to cover the retreat of his fugitive army, is rendered almost certain from the following circumstances.

On the north side of the ravine where the desperate stand was made, there have been found few places of sepulture, with the exception of that of the Bishop himself; while on the south side, for almost a mile in extent, and varying in breadth from a quarter to half a mile, nothing was to be met with but graves.

About thirty years ago, the tenant on the farm of Barholm, in carrying a series of judicious improvements into effect, had the progress of the plow arrested every minute by the intervention of a grave—and was at last compelled to abandon his operations, till the stones wherewith they had been rudely constructed were raised and carried away. These graves were of various structures and dimensions, some of the bodies having been interred in a recumbent, and others in a sitting posture. In some instances they had been lined and covered with flag-stones, and in the [illegible] rudely formed of baked and unglazed clay, were occasionally found, containing a blackish, [illegible] earth. But even so little tenacity did these urns possess, that after a short exposure to the atmosphere, they uniformly crumbled into dust.

Where the bodies had been interred in a sitting posture, the graves were always lined on the sides and ends, by walls of rude masonry, without any cement, and the floor, though composed only of earth, was nevertheless beaten into a consistence so hard and smooth, that it resisted for sometime the efforts of the pick-axe to make any impression on it.

Of the number of graves no possible estimate can be formed, as it was only in places capable of improvement wherein they were disturbed.

It may be stated, however, that the quantity of stones taken out, were more than sufficient to build from two to three hundred roods of dykes, by which the fields were subdivided.

Another circumstance may be mentioned here, of rather a singular character, which is, that no order nor arrangement seemed to have been attended to in the direction of the body to any particular point of the compass; on the contrary, every thing appears to have depended on the nature of the soil, or caprice of the pioneers, as it was nothing uncommon to find it at right angles, and in every other intermediate line of direction.

One thing alone appears to have been systematically adhered to—all the graves, on which considerable labour has been bestowed, particularly those where the body had been placed in a sitting posture, occupied the tops of dry knolls, while those of a humble class were grouped together promiscuously in swamps and boggy ground.

The complete state of disorganisation in which the tenants of these humble mansions were found to be, would almost lead to the conclusion, that they belonged to a period more remote than that referred to in our legend, as not a single fragment of bone would endure to be handled, but crumbled into dust on the slightest touch. This may, however, in some measure be accounted for, when we take into consideration the shallowness of the graves, which, in no instance, were more than a foot from the surface, and the soft spongy nature of the soil having such a tendency to animal decomposition. These things being duly reflected on, the difficulty will, we trust, in a great measure disappear.

Still, however, there is one objection of too formidable a character to be passed over in silence, and as its admission would unhinge the credibility of our legend, it shall be our endeavour in this place to obviate it. It has been asserted by many, and among these some whose antiquarian researches entitle them to respect, that this was the burial place of "King Galdus," or "Aldus MacGaldus," a sovereign who made some noise in the fabulous era of our history, and who, it

is alleged, fell in a bloody battle fought against the Picts. But against this we would object the posthumous ubiquity of "King Galdus," whose place of sepulture has been, with an equal show of probability, claimed by the antiquaries of the county of Wigtown, who assert, that he was buried at the Standing Stones of Tor-house, in the parish of Wigtown;* while others, with equal pertinacity, affirm that he was superhumed in a cairn on the farm of Glenquicken, in the parish of Kirkmabreck. We, leaning with a considerable bias to the latter opinion, would refer the reader to our letter on that subject, as quoted by Mr Chambers in the last volume of "Caledonia."

In so far as relates to the tomb in question, therefore, we flatter ourself that the legend here given contains a more probable, and at the same time more consistent narrative of the events which led to the defeat and death of the gallant, though unfortunate Thomas, than any that has hitherto appeared; as even the name, which the place still bears, could refer only to a person in holy orders; and on a candid review of the facts we have stat-

* Murray's Literary History of Galloway, p. 351.

ed, we do not hesitate a moment in assigning to him the unquestionable occupancy of the disputed mausoleum.

Such is the tradition of the Battle of Cairnholy; and such was the fate of the last English army that ever had an establishment in the province. For though it might, at some after periods, have suffered from partial invasion, or piratical incursions by sea, yet we do not find that they were ever again in possession of any of its strengths, or held permanent sway over any part of the country.

That history should have been silent on an event of such importance, is to be attributed solely to the state of literature at that time, and to the little interest excited by actions of such frequent occurrence. But the numerous localities connected with it; the bloody tracks which mark, as it were, the footsteps of the "Destroying Angel" through the whole line of march; the extent of the field of battle, and number of the slain in the final struggle, all bear evidence that it has been on a scale of sufficient magnitude to have decided the fate of the province.

THE END.

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